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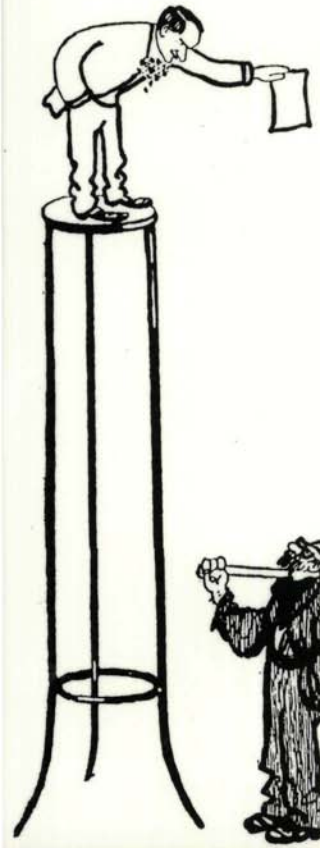
The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism
Paul Piccone

Modell Deutschland and the New Europe
Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich

German Unification, Nationalism and Democracy
Horst Mewes



Special Section on Poland:

David Ost: The Crisis of Liberalism in Poland
Janina Paradowska: An Interview with Adam Michnik
E. & J. Tarkowski: Social Disintegration in Poland
Mira Marody: Polish Political Attitudes

Notes, Commentaries and Reviews:

Kevin Mattson: Populism and the NEA
Moishe Gonzales: The Politics of the Thomas Hearings
Luciano Pellicani: The Cultural War between East and West
Claude Karnoouh: National Culture in Eastern Europe
David Pan: The Deconstruction of Tragedy
Eva Geulen: A Matter of Tradition
Robert Hullot-Kentor: Jameson on Adorno
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G. L. Ulmen: Weber on China
John DeBrizzi: Filiopiety Meets Labor Studies

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A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Introduction

This issue was to be devoted entirely to the nature and implications of European unification. Putting it together, however, turned out to be almost as daunting as the project it addressed. As a result, the special issue did not come off. While not necessarily indicative of the ultimate fate of the old continent, this predicament reflects some of the problems confronting that project. Many of the articles received by the two guest editors entrusted with the organization of the relevant material, Jack Zipes and Ulysses Santamaría, were either not very engaging or more focused on bureaucratic problems in Brussels than on European unification. To complicate matters, Santamaría died unexpectedly even before the main themes had been decided. Thus, notwithstanding its eclectic and unresolved character, this issue is dedicated to the memory of Ulysses, a friend and collaborator whose life turned out to be a microcosm of this broader predicament. A tribute appears at the end of this issue.

Recent upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe, the reputed victory of capitalism over Communism, and German reunification have raised once again the "German question" as the key issue of European politics. Predicated on a politically strong France balanced by the powerful economy of a divided Germany and the mediation of the rest of the members, the original project of Europe 1992 became obsolete well before it could be implemented. As Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich indicate, today German hegemony is already a *fait accompli* and all that remains to be decided is what precise configuration it will take in the coming years. Such a predicament has raised once again the unresolved and probably unresolvable question of German national identity, which Horst Mewes discusses in his article on "German Unification, Nationalism and Democracy." But is German identity merely a national question, as Mewes suggests, or is it a matter transcending the traditional notion of the European sovereign state?

The question of a new Europe is, first and foremost, a question of the old Europe: the past history and present problematic of the European state. It has to do with the decline of the centuries-old *jus publicum Europaeum* already obvious at the end of the 19th century and generally recognized after WWI. The fundamental institution of that *jus publicum Europaeum* — the European sovereign state with fixed boundaries and homogeneous populations — had brought about a rationalization of relations between states belonging to the European community as well as an imperialist system defining those areas outside it. As a counterpart to the sovereign state, the *jus publicum Europaeum* also constituted a system of international law. Both collapsed when former colonies became independent and it was no longer possible to distinguish them from the original European states. The ramifications of this collapse and the implied

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obsolescence of the sovereign state were simultaneously delayed and occluded by the rise of the US and the USSR, WWII and the Cold War. Far from providing alternatives to the traditional nation-state, after WWI both the USA and the USSR developed into distorted versions of the very European state and system they opposed — one by promoting an official ideology of global democracy, the other of global socialization. The political pathologies of Nazism and Communism, along with much of the virulent nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism and xenophobia re-emerging today, are also expressions of the decline of that old order. The collapse of bureaucratic centralism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and the fading of the "superpowers" has once again brought to the fore these unresolved problems. Thus the new movements for *national* independence in the former Soviet Empire are rushing into the future with a political perspective which has yet to catch up with the present.

Markovits and Reich note that virtually every country in Europe, East and West, is seeking to emulate Germany's socio-economic development, understood as the result of the deployment of *Modell Deutschland* — a model admired and envied even though it entails the "benign hegemony" of Germany *vis-à-vis* the rest of Europe. But since *Modell Deutschland* is predicated on close state monitoring of labor-capital and other economic relations, the preconditions for its success are already gone and the particular historical circumstances of Germany's *Wirtschaftswunder* may well have been more decisive for its unfolding than *Modell Deutschland* or any of its welfare state equivalents presupposing the permanence of the nation-state.

This model may be obsolete also in terms of its ideology, i.e., liberalism, which in the 20th century has become terminally statist. As Paul Piccone observes in his article on "The Crisis of Liberalism and the Rise of Federal Populism," the collapse of Communism "has plunged its declared menace, liberal democracy, into an unexpected identity crisis precisely when it should have been most secure." The impossibility of continuing to legitimate that Cold War military Keynesianism which has been the main prop for American economic development since WWII entails a repoliticization of socio-economic policy-making and a crisis of the welfare state. Although the focus of Piccone's argument is on American developments, the analysis applies to Europe as well — to the extent that European countries are also "liberal democracies." As Piccone shows, this crisis of liberalism — well underway since the 60s and now intensified with the end of the Cold War — has triggered the recent resurgence of populism. So far, however, populism in the US has not been able to generate anything more than resentment and, at best, efforts to rationalize current liberal policies. This is because populism in its traditional *national* form is itself obsolete and predicated on 19th century pre-welfare state realities which have long since been displaced by those created by "late liberalism." Thus populism needs to reexamine its fundamental premises and develop new *regional* and *federal* strategies. Its main enemy is now the central state and the New Class, against which it must call for decentralization, regionalization and the constitution of new community structures.

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This new populism is already beginning to develop in unlikely places such as Northern Italy, where the Lombard League is rapidly becoming a major political force seeking to restructure Italian politics and, eventually, Europe itself. The League emphasizes territoriality and the development of new local cultural forms rather than traditional cultural traits such as language, ethnicity or race. It is opposed to the nation-state and proposes its break-up to facilitate federation on a broader level. This deployment of a variant of the Swiss confederal model and of the original American federal system may well prefigure a truly unified Europe *without* the burden of obsolete nation-states. Unless existing states are eliminated as the building blocs of the new federation, a unified Europe will only generate a massive central bureaucracy in Brussels duplicating existing ones in every nation's capital. For Europe to reinvent Washington or Moscow would be an exercise in New Class futility. A more plausible framework would be the creation of a federation of local communities in which new forms of democratic participation can rationalize and render accountable administrative structures, thus eliminating the immense waste and inefficiency of existing centralized technocracies. Within such a framework the question of national identity, especially in countries such as Germany, would no longer be a burden but a challenge. As Bavarians, Scots, Normans or Catalonians, the peoples of a new Europe would no longer be limited by transcended "national" identities and could smoothly constitute a new heterogeneous, federated European *nomos*.

In the "Special Section on Poland" David Ost identifies similar dynamics in a country where the liberalism of well-known "civil society" ideologues has not only been soundly rejected but has become increasingly irrelevant — as Adam Michnik readily admits in a recent revealing interview — and the search is on for alternative populist or corporatist models. Ost's diagnosis is further supported by two other contributions — by Mira Marody, and Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski — depicting a Polish society immensely more traditional and pre-modern than even the more observant Western observers suspected. The present task in Poland is to invent new political forms adequate for the future, rather than recycle some decrepit "civil society." Unfortunately, as this issue was going to press, it was learned that Tarkowski, one of Poland's leading scholars, had died suddenly. Zygmunt Bauman's obituary briefly summarizes his very productive life, cut short precisely when it was most needed in the reconstruction of his country.

The "Notes and Commentary" section elaborates related themes in particular political contexts. Thus Kevin Mattson considers the recent controversy over US federal funding of the arts from a populist perspective, calling for a decentralized, community-based culture as opposed to the prevailing elitist model advocated by an alliance of New Class bureaucrats and avant-garde artists. Similarly, Moishe Gonzales shows how legalitarianism has delegitimated the legal system to the point that, in the confirmation of US Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas, criteria of competence and merit were completely overshadowed by

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supra-legal values of racial justice and gender equality. Both controversies bear important implications for a federal populism, which seeks to maximize local autonomy.

Luciano Pellicani and Claude Karnoouh both describe the irresistible power of capitalism in homogenizing and annihilating local cultures in Eastern Europe and the Third World. Caught in the unidimensional logic of a liberalism unable to conceive of possible alternatives, both Pellicani and Karnoouh paint a pessimistic scenario. Key questions remain unasked. Would these cultures be able to survive within a dynamic federal populism? Is the introduction of the market *necessarily* synonymous with cultural devastation? Can the examples of Japan and Taiwan be ignored? In an age of growing liberal and social democratic decline, answers to these questions are no longer as clear cut as they may have seemed a few years ago.

The first three reviews highlight the difficulties encountered by a rapidly declining liberalism and an equally spent, though still fashionable post-structuralism in grasping current realities. David Pan's review of John Sallis' recent book on Nietzsche questions liberal attempts to obliterate "the metaphysical dimension" in the futile effort to present a self-contained modernity exhaustively articulated in conceptual structures. Thus Sallis "ends up supporting the very Enlightenment project Nietzsche attacked" and "the post-structuralist account of Nietzsche reveals itself to be an Enlightenment prioritization of science and progress over life." What is lost in the process is that materiality of Being which, although always immediately given in what Edmund Husserl described as "the living present," can never be exhaustively apprehended conceptually without simultaneously destroying or distorting it.

Both Eva Geulen and Robert Hullot-Kentor carefully examine Fredric Jameson's instrumentalization of Adorno's philosophy in his vain attempt to revalidate a particularly stale version of Althusserianism as Marxist "science." Jameson really believes that history has finally caught up with Adorno. In an age when tendentially totalizing bureaucracies (i.e., bureaucracies which have assimilated and therefore obliterated all internal control mechanisms) are universally inefficient and counterproductive, when capitalism itself is desperately trying to decentralize along post-Fordist lines, Jameson argues that "late capitalism" has finally succeeded in bringing about that Brave New World of total organization and central planning. His bizarre recycling of Adorno at this point in history is but an extreme example of how academically fashionable theory has become irrelevant as it occludes real problems and possible solutions in philosophical and rhetorical vacuity.

— *G. L. Ulmen*

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The Crisis of Liberalism and the Emergence of Federal Populism

Paul Piccone

The bankruptcy of liberalism has been forecast so often that a sense of impending doom has become part of its very definition. The various crises prefiguring its demise, however, have only triggered structural adjustments resulting primarily in more efficient versions of the same basic system. Frustration with this political collapse which never came has generated an opposite, equally mistaken, attitude. Thus during the last decade many of the doomsday radicals of the 1960s have become fervent believers in liberalism's eternal validity. Fundamental Enlightenment values, which were already part and parcel of most radicals' *Weltanschauung*, have ceased to be lofty ideals to be realized in a future social order of "freedom, equality and fraternity" and, instead, are now seen as already embodied in existing institutions requiring only fine tuning to function effectively in this, the best of all possible worlds.

Both these ahistorical approaches fail to take into account the modifications liberalism has undergone in order to survive, how it has gradually changed from an anarchic to a statist system, and the fragility of some of the means it has deployed to solve major structural crises. Its weakest feature, democratic legitimacy, which has been mistakenly assumed to be an integral part of its "liberal democratic" framework, has been so systematically overlooked that, when it resurfaces as a challenge to liberalism in the form of populism, born again liberals are peculiarly incapable of dealing with it. The same goes for an increasing number of cases where anti-liberal and often authoritarian regimes are democratically elected — as in Iran, Algeria, the former Soviet Georgia, etc. — with overwhelming popular support. This is largely because the very notion

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of liberalism is so confused and subject to such a variety of contradictory definitions that any political analysis which does not spell out exactly what it means is condemned to inevitable misunderstandings.

To avoid such a predicament, the following account discusses liberalism both as the New Class ideology of a significant sector of the American polity (support for a strong redistributive state apparatus, abstract individualism, a growing number of human and civil rights, universalism, scientism, etc.) and as a political philosophy predicated on constitutionalism, democratic legitimacy and the inviolability of a number of first principles embodied in the nation-state. The two meanings are historically interwined. Yet, while in the first case it is possible to contrapose it to a "conservatism" opposed to at least some of the features of New Class ideology, in the second both liberals and conservatives can be regarded "liberal." Conservatives, in fact, are committed to the same "liberal democratic" system, which they contrapose to alternatives such as bureaucratic collectivism or Islamic fundamentalism based on different principles such as transcendental truth and legitimated by the future social orders they promise to bring about.

When contraposed to New Class ideology, populism as a *Weltanschauung* can only mean popular sovereignty and the privileging of democratic legitimacy over and above all other political tenets, no matter how solidly grounded they may claim to be. Thus the recent resurgence of populism is not merely a temporary aberration but an expression of the modern political predicament, which since before WWI has been vitiated by a series of exceptional but now increasingly obsolescent historical conditions. As a response to particular political problems, however, populist politics are also historically contingent and, within different contexts, assume a variety of idiosyncratic configurations. The following analysis attempts to explain why the present crisis of liberalism — both as an ideology and as a political system — requires populist responses to emphasize federalism, regionalism and the dismantling of predominant New Class modes of domination.

Unfortunately, populism is not blessed with a rich theoretical tradition. Its meaning is all but obvious and usually associated with its premodern manifestations predicated on the primacy of ethnicity, religion, language, etc. as organizing principles. Contrary to liberal misreadings, however, this is not the kind of populism emerging today in advanced industrial societies such as Western Europe. This new populism defies standard Left/Right political characterizations and strains to the limit existing bipolar political theories. This is why new

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populist political formations such as the Lombard League in Northern Italy, which can be seen as a paradigmatic expression of this phenomenon, have been systematically misunderstood and generally dismissed as right-wing reactions to modernity. In fact, they warrant careful scrutiny precisely because, within new historical conditions, they articulate the same democratic spirit that gave rise to the original American Constitution and the Swiss Confederation, and provide a concrete alternative to a moribund liberalism.

The Unraveling of the Liberal Consensus

Now that the Cold War is over, "liberal democracy" seems to have triumphed over its communist nemesis beyond its most optimistic expectations. To the extent that communist regimes collapsed internally rather than as a result of military defeats or other coercive means, the end of communism is even more definitive and clear-cut than the annihilation of fascism and Nazism by force of arms. While in the latter case the *external* imposition of the radical break with the past left the question of its *internalization* by the societies involved temporarily unresolved — pending other institutional and socio-psychological adjustments — in the case of communism the final blow was delivered by voluntary reforms such as *glasnost* and *perestroika* or, more precisely, their unintended consequences precipitating "velvet revolutions" and the failed Soviet *coup d'état*. From the viewpoint of liberal democracy, however, the victory may have been *too* thorough and thus ultimately Pyrrhic — to the point of threatening the system's very identity, since for the past four decades liberalism has been defined by its other: the bureaucratic collectivism of communist regimes.

Unlike the relatively satisfactory resolution of Hegel's dialectic of master and slave, where the vanquished is not annihilated but only subjugated in order to testify to his inferiority and thus provide the legitimating recognition the master needs to establish his very identity, the definitive obliteration of communism has plunged its declared nemesis, liberal democracy, into an unexpected identity crisis precisely when it should have been most secure. The American political system is now increasingly unable to articulate institutionally those collective values and aspirations whose heterogeneity had hitherto been conveniently fused into a national *group* (in the Sartrean sense) by the external mediation of the threatening communist other. That foreign "danger" has provided an overriding national purpose legitimating the growing shortcomings of an expanding state apparatus as the unavoidable emergency

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cost of the post-WWII global confrontation with an expansionist "totalitarian" system — a confrontation which greatly facilitated the centralization of federal spending around a huge military budget, circumscribed internal political debates within an anti-communist consensus, and homogenized all values by means of a shallow consumerism. The restructuring of the old bipolar geopolitical context into three new power blocs no longer competing primarily for political and military dominance but merely for economic hegemony has reactivated conflicts which could be managed effectively within the existing political framework only as long as prevailing international emergency conditions remained relatively stable.

Having lost its totalizing other, the US liberal consensus of the Cold War years is now unravelling into a new version of pre-New Deal seriality and is thus confronted once again with those old internal conflicts (between labor and capital, freedom and equality, public and private) which it had managed to externalize for over forty years. They reappear transubstantiated as conflicts over fiscal reforms, civil rights and cultural autonomy. Contrary to the liberal establishment's self-congratulatory gloating and its technocratic flattening of history into a brave new world of unimpeded capitalist growth and successful social engineering, the end of communism has undermined the military Keynesianism which, since WWII, had artificially energized a tired corporate liberalism with smaller but equally lethal doses of the same centralist-bureaucratic narcotic whose debilitating side-effects were ultimately responsible for the demise of communist regimes: excessive centralization, compulsive homogenization, enforced conformity and arbitrary redistributive practices. Unable any longer to conceal within the Defense Department budget and Pentagon procurement practices the central planning it pretended to reject in principle, "liberal democracy" now has to deal with the re-politicization of previously technocratic decision-making processes and allocations which, for vague but widely accepted national security reasons, had been quietly removed from broad public scrutiny and turned into the administrative prerogatives of experts and professionals.

What complicates matters is that this repoliticization has had to take place under conditions of decreasing available resources. While the unexpected obsolescence of the arms race has rendered superfluous a great deal of military expenditures and encouraged countless would-be liberal reformers to recycle the Great Society delusions of an earlier generation, post-communist realities have turned out to be considerably

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less rosy. Instead of freeing for other domestic uses substantial chunks of the defense budget, the decrease in justifiable military needs (reversed only temporarily because of the Gulf war) has depressed aggregate demand and undermined the political justification for massive budget deficits incurred in responding to the threat posed by various "red menaces," "missile gaps" or "evil empires." Consequently, the US government has had to consider decreasing *all* federal expenditures in the attempt to balance the budget (and even begin to consider reducing the national debt whose servicing absorbs growing percentages of the GNP). The result is a further reduction of aggregate demand and the plunging of the system into an economic recession no longer readily susceptible to traditional Keynesian therapy. Contrary to conventional liberal wisdom, what has invigorated the system for well over half a century was not a *temporary* and fiscally inconsequential "pump priming" but *permanent* deficit spending which is increasingly difficult to sustain and justify without severely mortgaging the future by overburdening and thus handicapping the economy .

Even if the problem of the growing deficit could be overlooked, continuing massive government deficit spending confronts new and probably insurmountable obstacles. The automatic answer to the obsolescence of military Keynesianism, i.e., to find something functionally equivalent, able to guarantee steady growth and a new totalizing national purpose (such as rebuilding the nation's infrastructure or undertaking ambitious programs of space exploration, ecological repair, etc.), is ruled out by two factors. First, it would be extremely difficult to build a national consensus around such massive projects without an overriding military threat. In this respect, the post-Cold War predicament resembles the one obtaining immediately before WWII, when the New Deal attempted to do something of the sort and ran into insurmountable political opposition. Massive totalizing projects of social reconstruction presuppose a prior national consensus which, with the exception of anti-fascism and anti-communism, either does not exist in the US or is impossible to construct under present conditions of sharply conflicting interests. What made military Keynesianism such an ideal solution was not so much its economic priming role but the fact that it legitimately suspended otherwise disruptive democratic decision-making practices and opened the gate to practically unaccountable government spending. Second, while in the 1940s it was possible to propose massive deficit spending as a *temporary* aberration to be rectified with the return to normal peacetime conditions of economic

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stability, no such promise would be minimally credible today, after the experience of over half a century of accumulating a staggering national debt.

To the extent that the US has developed into an increasingly self-conscious heterogeneous society comprising a multitude of particularistic groups vindicating real or imagined value orientations, the unavoidable public debate concerning "the" national purpose necessary to totalize the polity behind any particular macroeconomic project is very likely to result in a stalemate impossible to resolve by standard liberal means within the existing institutional framework. Whereas from the 1920s to the 1960s the strategy of Americanization by means of the culture industry, universal education, etc. continued to homogenize a national constituency whose heterogeneity was simultaneously encouraged by the integration of previously excluded ethnic groups, it did so on the basis of questionable minimalist values such as consumerism and abstract individualism, which could be upheld only during periods of collective upward mobility and growing affluence.

The end of rapid growth in the 1990s brought about by the obsolescence of military Keynesianism, combined with the realization of the cultural devastation wrought by consumerism and Americanization, has contributed to a disenchantment with liberalism and the revitalization of the submerged but never entirely obliterated populist political tradition. What fuels this tradition is not only the significantly eroded yet still operative American ethos of self-sufficiency, autonomy and personal responsibility, which is anathema to any centralizing project presupposing standardization and homogenization. More importantly, it is also an expression of a growing impatience with the waste, inefficiency, counterproductivity and questionable rationality of an increasingly distant central government. When all is said and done, the US remains a society deeply distrustful of central authority not readily accountable to its legitimating constituency.

It is no accident that every instance of significant expansion of state capacities in the US — from war mobilization during WWI, the Great Depression, WWII, and the Cold War — has been (and could only be) in response to a crisis situation impossible to confront otherwise. Thus the end of the Cold War and the relative stabilization of international relations under the stewardship of three major power blocs inextricably connected by cultural and economic ties prematurely draws the curtain on the 20th century — a century characterized by a crisis-driven centralization causing considerable intended and unintended social disintegration.

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As Christopher Lasch has shown, the corollary of this process of practically uninterrupted centralization from WWI on has been liberalism's turn into an elitist and managerial ideology.[1] Independently of the recent demise of military Keynesianism, over the last thirty years growing opposition to this kind of liberalism had already triggered considerable resentment resulting in the resurgence of a populism that had exploded on the American scene in the late 19th century.[2] Its demise at that time was not, as Lawrence Goodwyn emphasizes, entirely a function of political contingencies such as poor choices culminating in its fusion with the Democratic Party in 1896. Nor was it primarily due to the return of economic prosperity, as Richard Hofstadter deduces from his reading of the movement as a relatively irrelevant pressure-group-turned-into-a-political-party clumsily articulating a rural version of "entrepreneurial radicalism."[3] In the long run the fate of populism, broadly understood as a particular expression of the American democratic project, was sealed by the Progressive movement and its legacy. By advocating increased state regulation of the economy, Progressivism and the New Deal managed to fulfill the *letter* of populist demands for state protection of their economic interests threatened by unscrupulous banking practices, tight money policies and growing industrial exploitation, but not their democratic *spirit*. This helps explain why populism resurfaced in the early 1960s, with the beginning of the crisis of the welfare state. At that point it became increasingly obvious that state regulation of the economy had more to do with guaranteeing the profitability of capital and providing remunerative employment opportunities for New Class technocrats than with safeguarding populist interests now expanded well beyond Southern and Western farmers to include most of the middle classes.

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1. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven: Progress and its Critics* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1991), esp. Ch. 10, "The Politics of the Civilized Minority," pp. 412-532.

2. Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise: The Populist Movement in America* (New York: Oxford, 1976). The publication of this work marked the beginning of a re-evaluation of American populism and reversed standard liberal interpretations of the movement fabricated by liberal historians during the 1950s as tendentially reactionary, racist and anti-intellectual. The many studies that have appeared since that time only expand and extend its analysis, without necessitating any substantial alteration of the main thesis. For a standard liberal misreading of populism, see Peter Wiles, "A Syndrome, not a Doctrine: Some Elementary Theses on Populism," in Ghita Ionescu and Ernest Gellner, eds., *Populism: Its Meaning and National Characteristics* (London: Weidenfled and Nicholson, 1969), pp. 166-179.

3. Richard Hofstadter, "North America," in Ionescu and Gellner eds., *Populism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-27. While widely regarded as the standard account during the 1950s and 1960s, Hofstadter's work has not withstood critical scrutiny. Cf. Lasch, *op. cit.*, pp. 217-225.

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This opposition is not simply the expression of a shifting and generally fickle national mood but is related to the institutional involution of the welfare state — the natural outcome of liberal regimes. Although liberalism has been defined in a number of different ways, its overprivileging of individualism — possessive, abstract or otherwise — necessitates the deployment of an increasingly powerful state, independently of whatever particular crises may have historically precipitated the actual centralization of power. Thus liberalism is terminally statist. Since the individual cannot be the source of a morality it already presupposes, and as inherited social norms are systematically eroded by the instrumental rationality of a modernity unable to legitimate anything not immediately redeemable at the marketplace of operational ideas, liberals have had to resort more and more to the state as the agency entrusted with externally containing an indeterminate collective behavior no longer internally regulated by traditional moral codes. But in the long run state intervention only compounds the problem by extending and generalizing instrumental rationality, thus undermining the preconditions for its own continued intervention. It erodes that individuality presupposed as a precondition for the functioning of the system and gradually engenders a state-dependent personality increasingly unable to function without the administration and guidance of managerial agencies. No longer resisted and therefore no longer closely monitored by a weakened individualism and autonomous social institutions, these agencies become themselves increasingly unaccountable to any external bodies and thus vulnerable to corruption, waste and counterproductivity.[4]

Sociology to the Rescue

Liberal thinkers have recognized these destructive dynamics and sought solutions either through further rationalization of the particular communities or through an ethical regrounding of the welfare state. However, to the extent that their analyses remain within liberal New Class ideological assumptions the solutions they propose are either predicated on wishful thinking or end up perpetuating and intensifying existing social pathologies. Thus, in the case of Jürgen Habermas, probably the best known European liberal with a large American following, his commitment to a communicative version of the liberal

4. For an earlier analysis of this crisis and of the changes in administrative strategies to counter bureaucratic involution by integrating new forms of internal opposition, see Paul Piccone, "The Crisis of One-Dimensionality," in *Telos* 35 (Spring 1978), pp. 44-54.

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theory of infinite progress (predicated on the inevitability of the growth of knowledge) leads him to hypostatize the present crisis-ridden welfare state as an irreversible historical achievement. One solution to the crisis is to devise strategies to defuse the growing unease with liberalism by reintegrating unfulfilled populist aspirations into what he can only interpret as a temporary legitimation crisis precipitated by bureaucratic excesses and democratic deficits.[5]

Unlike most other liberal thinkers who dismiss the populist emphasis on existing community norms and local autonomy as a reactionary defense of pre-modern superstition and dogma, Habermas readily acknowledges the centrality of this populist dimension and locates it as

5. The crisis of liberal democracy presupposes, as part of its ideological self-misunderstanding, a liberal theory no longer able to confront its own crisis other than by proposing as solutions what otherwise turn out to be the problems. Thus a couple of decades ago Habermas, whose communication theory is but a linguistification of Weberian sociology, simply extended the liberal prognosis in analyzing what he saw as a growing legitimation crisis in Western societies in terms of the collapse of the historical compromise between labor and capital. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *Legitimation Crisis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1975). According to this compromise, labor forfeited decision-making options to a technostructure entrusted with retaining unchanged existing relations of domination, in exchange for relatively high wages, affluence and an abundance of consumer goods. For Habermas this compromise collapsed when this technostructure became overcentralized and insulated from the essential feed-back mechanisms provided by the constituency it was to serve. As a result, it eroded the conditions necessary for its smooth functioning by engendering an economic crisis (*qua* ecological crisis of physical limits to growth), a rationality crisis (*qua* destruction of regulatory feed-back mechanisms) and a motivation crisis (*qua* the undermining of individualism and the development of what has come to be known as the state-dependent personality). Thus the legitimation crisis was the result of these other three crises and could only be resolved through a redemocratization of politics which, by providing solutions to the other three crises, would also relegitimate "liberal democratic" systems. The assumption throughout was that the emancipatory character of undistorted communication would necessarily generate a rational consensus translatable into the rational administrative structure of the welfare state. Predicated on questionable enthymematic Marxist premises assuming the axiological uniformity of a "labor" tendentially constituting the universal class, this analysis may have made sense in a society such as Germany where the relatively high homogeneity of the population meant that there were shared traditions and customs translatable into a new liberal consensus for particular programs of social reconstruction — such as the SPD's *Modell Deutschland* successfully deployed in the late 1970s to displace Ludwig Erhard's post-war technocratic strategy. It made no sense in the US, however, where cultural heterogeneity ruled out any smooth deployment of such a strategy. Over a decade after writing *Legitimation Crisis*, and after discovering Husserl's concept of the *Lebenswelt* (which Habermas redefined in terms of communication theory), his analysis became more sophisticated without, however, losing its apologetic liberal character. The objective remains to relegitimate the welfare state by first rationalizing the polity through the blessings of undistorted discursive practices — another case of Bertolt Brecht's state officials electing new voters to replace the existing ones they do not like.

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a murky "third area," beneath the state and the equivalent of what his more careless American epigones have redefined as "civil society" — an inherently ambiguous term he is wise enough not to use. He also acknowledges that, to the extent it expresses heterogeneous grass-roots concerns, this grass-roots populist dimension cannot be reduced to one homogeneous camp. Thus, after his bruising confrontation with post-modernity, he no longer talks about any one-dimensional discursive domain but about a plurality of "public spheres" to take into account the particularity of the various heterogeneous communities. This pluralism, however, is only a tactical concession since in politically constituting their demands all these public spheres must ultimately articulate discursively their processes of collective will-formation and become caught in the universalism he assumes to be presupposed by undistorted communicative practices. These practices will permeate any consciousness — populist or otherwise — which, in order to have political impact, cannot remain spontaneous and inarticulate. Effective resistence to what Habermas mystifies as "the colonization of the lifeworld" is possible only if the various communities undergo a thorough "communicative" rationalization which eventually will level them out and make them conform with the pseudo-universalist tenets of predominant New Class ideology, i.e., the homogenization of precisely that particularity populists seek to defend. Habermas' vindication of the primacy of the lifeworld or of populist instances is at the same time a strategy of instrumentalization since it requires an exhaustive translation of populist traditions and customs into communicatively articulated norms. As such communication theory ends up as the functional equivalent of the culture industry, universal education and other older leveling institutions in rationalizing and making more responsive a liberal democracy which has lost contact with its legitimating foundations. The point throughout is to defend the welfare state against neoconservative attacks.[6]

Habermas' solution essentially consists in having the various constituencies homogenize spontaneously rather than by forcing pseudo-universalist New Class ideology on them. Unfortunately, his demand that all features of the populist lifeworld be discursively articulated not only threatens to destroy it even more effectively than standard bureaucratic

6. See Jürgen Habermas, "The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies," in *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historians' Debate*, ed. and trans. by Shierry Weber Nicholson (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 58-69.

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strategies of colonization but also provides no guarantees that the end product will be anything close to the ideal speech communities he envisions. It is an act of unwarranted modernist faith to assume that the spontaneous rationalization of the lifeworld will automatically universalize the ideal speech situation. Short of constituting a communicative brave new world where everyone will speak impeccably a mythical language able to exhaustively and unambiguously apprehend reality, cultural heterogeneity is here to stay — not as a mark of imperfection, but as an ineradicable condition of Being. This elaborate exercise in translating into communication theory standard welfare state practices of mediatizing constituencies into "spontaneously" sponsoring otherwise extraneous technocratic policies misses the real point. In heterogeneous societies liberalism cannot sustain a highly centralized state without at the same time bureaucratically homogenizing and thereby destroying the autonomy of the various constituencies — a precondition for the system's rationality and democratic legitimacy — nor can it guarantee the particularity and autonomy of these constituencies while remaining centralized. In order to remain centralized it must trivialize the axiological dimension and reduce it to minimal values such as consumerism and affluence — values acceptable to a broad range of constituencies. At any rate such a strategy remains viable only under conditions of steady economic growth during which all other problems are assumed to be resolvable by means of the new affluence.

Other liberals are not seduced as readily as Habermas by the sirens of communication theory and the promise that, if everyone were to talk openly to everyone else, all disagreements would evaporate and the system would be successfully prevented from colonizing spontaneously self-rationalizing lifeworlds. Unconvinced by the emancipatory virtues of undistorted discursive practices, sociologists such as Alan Wolfe recognize the central constitutive role of values in society and focus directly on the radical regrounding of fundamental values. Thus they readily grant that "a liberal theory of politics was linked to a conservative theory of society"[7] and they also grudgingly acknowledge that liberal institutions relying exclusively on market and state as steering mechanisms tend to erode these traditional preconditions.[8] Unwilling to grant the legitimacy of these traditional residues whose erosion has precipitated contemporary social disintegration — Habermas' lifeworld or the

7. Alan Wolfe, *Whose Keeper? Social Science and Moral Obligation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 108.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

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populists' traditions and customs, they call for the deployment of sociology as a moral guide to reconstitute a "civil society" presently in ruins and to substitute a new moral vision for traditional or "conservative" cultural underpinnings.[9]

But morality is not a matter of abstract deliberation by committees of professional sociologists, no matter how eminently qualified they may be. It has to do with the most fundamental determinants of personal and social identity. Thus it can never be amenable to "the construction of moral rules as a sociological practice" as Wolfe claims, since people are always already rooted in living traditions that constitute them as moral agents.[10] The point is to *modify* and reconstitute existing practices rather than to pontificate abstractly about sociological experts "helping people make their own rules." A truly democratic solution unshackled by the elitist encroachment of state agencies of sociological rationalization would be to *protect* existing communities within a strong federal context in which their axiological codes are not superseded by external and allegedly transcendental alternatives or forcibly penetrated and colonized by any "emancipatory" agencies whose ethical superiority can only be predicated on some other implicit code. To the extent that the current crisis of liberalism has to do with its inability to provide totalizing norms sufficiently strong and universally binding to anchor a viable project of social reconstruction, Wolfe's sociological approach to moral obligation is unlikely to do anything different from what sociology has always done.[11] Instead of mediating the reconstitution of the components of Wolfe's "civil society" with the help of

9. *Ibid.*, p. 257.

10. Habermas also rejects the possibility of grounding morality in the subject — something for which Wolfe reprimands him. However, Habermas' alternative in his *Diskursethik*, i.e, to ground it in *linguistic* intersubjectivity, is hardly an improvement over Wolfe (*ibid.*, p. 233). To be sure, Wolfe does not want sociologists to condescendingly set people straight as to the nature of their moral obligations. In fact, he explicitly claims that the "distinctive contribution of a sociological approach to morality . . . is not to tell people what they ought to do in situations of moral complexity, but rather to help individuals discover and apply for themselves the moral rules they already, as social beings, possess" (*ibid.*, p. 211). But if such is the case, it is unclear why people need sociologists in such a task rather than, e.g., rabbis, bartenders or psychotherapists.

11. Wolfe's efforts to descientize sociology is tantamount to throwing in the towel after over a century of systematic efforts to develop the discipline as a "social science." It would self-consciously turn sociology into what it was immediately after the Civil War, before it sought to become a science. Cf. Stephen Park Turner and Jonathan H. Turner, *The Impossible Science: An Institutional Analysis of American Sociology* (New York: Sage Publications, 1990), pp. 11ff. This honest concession by Wolfe, however, should also acknowledge the failure of the project that the scientization of sociology was meant to fulfill, i.e., to legitimate as universally valid the moral tenets of secularized Protestantism;

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scientistic mystifications these traditional remnants neither need nor want, sociology can only inform and advise the only social institution that could have been receptive to its results: the administrative apparatus. Already by the 1950s, however, the R & D arm of this apparatus had become aware of the unreliability of social scientific knowledge and of the counterproductivity of most social engineering.[12]

While Wolfe's moral exhortations are predicated on liberalism's traditional assumption of abstract individuality, his vindication of a viable social role for sociologists appears much more like a self-serving attempt to reground a discipline confronting the loss of its real object with the decline of the welfare state. Possible populist objections to sociology follow Popperian lines. Since society has to do with people and their freedom, any *unrequested* intervention by sociologists or other agencies can only be an unwarranted intrusion. Sociology cannot be a social "science" having people as its objects because people are not passive objects but tendentially free subjects. Its real presupposed object, the welfare state, whose delegitimation threatens to leave sociology an academic orphan, cannot be recognized because that would reveal sociology to be what it has always been — a technology of domination — and thus undermine its moral exhortations as vacuous and manipulative strategies. Wolfe seems to have somehow realized as much. So he digs out of the 19th century the ambiguous concept of "civil society" as a new object to guarantee sociology a place in standard university catalogues: whereas political science studies the state and economics studies the market, sociology studies civil society. By implicitly defining civil society in the way sociologists have historically defined *communities*, he poses their reconstitution and nurturing as the task of sociology. Since, however, this definition of communities actually

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and thus caution against the desirability of developing and imposing an hegemonic moral code in an increasingly heterogeneous society. The history of "sovietization" and of the American welfare state are the most vivid testimony of recent failures of such a project.

12. Contrary to Wolfe's efforts to recycle sociology as the moral philosophy of "civil society" as a counterweight to political science's and economics' encroachment into its alleged domain by universalizing the state and the market, the Turners show that the present demise of sociology is a result of the diversification of the field in response to shifting student interests and the failure to develop a social science from the 1920s to the 1950s. Originally sponsored by the likes of the Rockefeller and Ford foundations as the scientization of Protestantism and, as such, as the universally valid basis of government policy, sociology's true calling as the intellectual arm of the bureaucratic apparatus was subverted by the spontaneous rise of critical sociology and the resulting internal disintegration of sociology as a discipline. Cf. Turner and Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 179-196; and Arthur J. Vidich and Stanford M. Lyman, *American Sociology: Worldly Rejections of Religion and Their Directions* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985).

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rules out sociological intervention, he readily substitutes "society" — civil or otherwise — whose formal character and present disintegrated predicament practically calls for a sociological intervention (something Wolfe seeks to legitimate by covertly appealing to traditional community values of *caritas*, compassion, care for others or, more generally, "moral obligation"). This conceptual fraud allows Wolfe to salvage an appropriate object of study for sociologists: moral philosophy. Their role, therefore, is another form of rationalization of "civil society." According to Wolfe, the sociologist should do for liberalism — only better — what Habermas' communication theory proposed: axiologically homogenize the polity and relegitimate the welfare state as the expression of its collective ethical will.

Since the late 19th century it has been generally assumed by most sociologists that the organicity provided by *communities*, what constituted personal identities, was lost with its displacement by formal social relations typical of *bourgeois society* (after Marx, the standard translation of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, now mystified as "civil society" and rediscovered by Wolfe in the Scottish Enlightenment). Since liberalism was the political horizon within which sociology thrived, from Weber and Parsons to Lipset and Bell all serious sociologists have sought to accomplish a *stabilization* rather than a *reversal* of this modern predicament. Caught within an updated version of the one-way liberal theory of history whereby progress unfolds from pre-modernity to modernity (and, more recently, to post-modernity), hardly any sociologist worth the name ever considered the reconstitution of communities. It is to Wolfe's credit that he not only recognizes the desirability of reconstituting communities by emphasizing "moral obligation," but actually poses it as a project for sociology as a discipline. Such a project, however, cannot be realized by sociology as he systematically misunderstands its domain and, consequently, the sociologist's role. His "realms of intimacy, trust, caring, and autonomy that *are* different from the larger world of politics and economics"[13] do not describe *societies* but *communities*. These realms are much closer to Habermas' lifeworld and to classical populist notions of communities[14] than to the standard notion

13. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

14. Unfortunately, Wolfe subscribes to a condescending notion of populism as "identification with the moral purity of the oppressed" (*ibid.*, p. 234). In so doing, he falls squarely in line with standard liberal misinterpretations of populism as a quasi-religious, irrational and, at any rate, hopelessly simplistic *Weltanschauung*. For a critique of Wolfe's earlier efforts to repackage and sell sociology as a discipline, see Moishe Gonzales, "Commentary on *Tikkun*," in *Telos* 69 (Fall 1986), pp. 134-135.

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of "society" before it became souped up by the qualifier "civil": an "arena in which a multitude of anonymous groups and collective agents influence one another, form coalitions, control access to the means of production and communication, and, already less visibly, preestablish through their social power the margins within which political questions can be thematized and decided."[15] Unlike societies, communities cannot be permanently rationalized by coercion: lasting rationalization requires a process of gradual internalization. By confusing the two Wolfe can deploy the sociologist as the equivalent of Hegel's "external mediator" to reconcile the heterogeneity of conflicting private interests, power struggles etc. — the classical role of the bureaucrat. But whereas Hegel's bureaucrat is neutral, Wolfe's sociologist cannot resist helping reconstitute community (a.k.a. "civil society"). Thus his scholarly bureaucrat tends to take on the role of the Jacobin or the Bolshevik as he realizes that what Wolfe calls "the gift of society" is being wasted. The rest is history! As much as one might sympathize with people confronted with unemployment or, if they already have tenure, with intellectual marginalization, community-reconstitution is too important a project to be staked out as a special reserve for otherwise academically displaced sociologists.

Sociologists professionally have no options other than to gravitate from communities (in which they cannot have any privileged role other than as integral members) to the state (where they can function as scientific experts). Since the state comes to occupy such a central role, they can best function in a society increasingly bifurcated into a managerial elite and disempowered masses, with a gray area in between occupied by residual "individuals" constituted as such by communities not yet completely eroded. Thus today the role of sociology is terminally restorational: in a context characterized by the natural disintegration of the welfare state, sociology seeks to relegitimate and rationalize it. At best sociology can aspire to be what it has always sought to become: the research arm of the bureaucratic apparatus. This feeds into the dynamics of the crisis of liberalism where an increasingly unmanageable government systematically disempowers its alienated citizens into passive wards of the state, unable or unwilling to function as citizens and in need of more and more supervision and guidance by sociologists and other "experts." But this is a losing proposition. Since disempowerment and alienation breed normlessness, social order can be

15. Habermas, *op. cit.*, p. 66.

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maintained only by increasing legislation to substitute for disintegrating internalized norms, which generates a vicious circle by engendering more alienation, and so on. Within this legalistic structuring of politics by late liberalism, most people find it increasingly impossible to participate, leaving them with civil disobedience as their only option to defend whatever values they feel threatened by the system or to articulate politically their particular interests uninterpreted and free of bureaucratic redescriptions.[16]

This crisis of technocratic liberal democracy manifests itself first and foremost as a crisis of ungovernability, whose most obvious symptoms are inefficiency, corruption and counterproductivity. It is not a particular problem with this or that government but an inherent feature of all representative institutions unable to establish strong feedback mechanisms guaranteeing accountability and, within a democratic context, legitimacy. Populism comes about as a response to this modern predicament: the result of the realization of an unbridgeable gap between real needs and official policies, lived informal norms and an increasingly remote formal rationality. It is not an accident that in popular speech "Washington" and "bureaucrat" have come to take on derogatory connotations.

16. This is the process Carl Schmitt described as that "motorized legislation" brought about by legal positivism's attempt to externalize and codify all previously internalized norms. It is part of that process Adorno and Horkheimer described as the dialectic of enlightenment, where the domination of the concept inexorably leads to the reversion of enlightenment into myth, i.e., the hypostatization of particular mythological values above all else. In Schmitt's formulation it became the cancer of the modern age and brought about the eventual instrumentalization and delegitimation of law into mere legality, the increasing deployment of super-legality understood precisely as the hypostatization of particular values above the law, and the inevitable disintegration of liberal democratic regimes — a disintegration already prefigured by the withering of the Soviet state. For a discussion of these concepts, see Carl Schmitt, "The Plight of European Jurisprudence," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 35-70. ; G. L. Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert: Eine Studie über Max Weber und Carl Schmitt* (Weinheim: Acta humaniora, 1991), pp. 69-86 and 408-448; and Michele Nicoletti, *Trascendenza e Potere: La Teologia Politica di Carl Schmitt* (Brescia: Marcelliana, 1990), pp. 353ff. Even Habermas acknowledges that this bureaucratic *modus operandi* of the welfare state disintegrates social life (*op. cit.*, pp. 58-59). However, his solution, i.e., "the establishment of new forms of life," presupposes the existence of that "undamaged subjectivity" he has finally acknowledged to be a counterfactual pipe dream (*ibid.*, p. 69). Either communities rationalize themselves according to their own logic, or it does not happen. Their particularities must be allowed to unfold according to their own dynamics, in relation with other competing communities. These particularities are ultimately totalized within a broad teleological project, but not through communication or language, and certainly not by sociologists. See Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen, "Schmitt's 'Testament' and the Future of Europe," in *Telos* 83 (Spring 1990), pp. 3-34.

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The Rise of the New Populism

Historically populist movements have arisen in response to a variety of different crises. 19th century agrarian populism in the American South was triggered by the Draconian deflationary fiscal policies instituted after the Civil War and their devastating consequences on farmers. In Russia, by contrast, populism sought a return to ethnic, religious and local traditions as the bases of a new order to avoid the tribulations of Western capitalist development.[17] As Lasch, Goodwyn and other historians of populism have emphasized, the recent resurgence of the phenomenon is a result of a growing dissatisfaction with the ideology of progress and unlimited economic development advocated both by liberal-democratic and bureaucratic-collectivist regimes. From the beginning of the century this transformation has taken place as the unintended consequence of the project of turning the American *federation* into a *nation* and has led to the deployment of a strategy of "Americanization." Today it is becoming increasingly obvious that the project did, on the whole, succeed, but only by replacing deeply-rooted traditions and customs with a narcissistic individualism and a shallow consumerism.

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17. Even more than American populism, its Russian counterpart has been the victim of considerable historical distortion, beginning with Engels himself, during the period after Marx' death, when he began to codify historical materialism into the "orthodox Marxism" of the Second International that eventually became frozen into the dogma of Marxism-Leninism. See Franco Venturi, *Studies in Free Russia*, trans, by Fausta Segre Alsby and Margaret O'Dell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), pp. 238-240. Thereafter Lenin and all subsequent communist historiography simply dismissed Russian populism as a backward-looking petty bourgeois aberration in the 19th century, dumped into the infamous dustbin of history once Leninism, the one and only true revolutionary theory and practice, came on the scene. In spite of dissenting interpretations by scholars such as Franco Venturi, Isaiah Berlin, Richard Pipes and others, this dogmatic interpretation remained predominant well into the early 1970s, when Polish *apparatchiki* such as Andrzej Walicki, elaborating Lenin's sacred texts, would still insist that populism was not even a *movement* but only the *ideology* of a sector of the Russian intelligentsia having little to do with real popular aspirations. See his "Russia," in Ionescu and Gellner, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91. This article is a shorter version of his equally questionable book *The Controversy over Capitalism. Studies in the Social Philosophy of the Russian Populists* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969). It is noteworthy that some of the pages of Isaiah Berlin's introduction to the standard text on the subject [Franco Venturi, *Roots of Revolution. A History of the Populist Movements in Nineteenth Century Russia* (London:Weinfeld and Nicholson, 1960)] could have come directly out of the best accounts of American populism by Lasch, Goodwyn or Norman Pollock (cf. his *The Just Polity: Populism, Law and Human Welfare* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988]). For a summary comparison of Russian and American populism, see Gianna Pomata, "A Common Heritage: The Historical Memory of Populism in Europe and the United States," in Harry C. Boyte and Frank Riessman, eds., *The New Populism: The Politics of Empowerment* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1986), pp. 30-50.

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To the extent that this project of Americanization was primarily a statist strategy only indirectly related to popular needs and aspirations, it did not succeed in generating an ethical vision sufficiently rich and widespread to sustain a *nation* and constitute a rough aggregation of particular groups — the US in the 19th century — into a broader *community*. The new values that did become generalized were those associated with consumerism, which fed smoothly into the logic of capitalist rationalization. Whatever heterogeneous traditions and customs turned out to be dysfunctional to the new order were readily branded premodern, irrational and ultimately a mark of obsolescence and backwardness. The result was the kind of community disintegration documented by the Lynds in their classic work, *Middletown*. The current resurgence of populism has to do with the growing realization of the magnitude of these losses and of the impossibility and/or undesirability of the infinite growth promised by liberalism — promises which do not seem fulfillable within existing economic dynamics and which, at any rate, increasingly threaten to precipitate massive ecological catastrophes.

Although otherwise incommensurable with the barbaric means deployed by bureaucratic-centralist regimes, especially during the Stalinist era, the Americanization strategy and its consequences are not structurally different from parallel processes in the former USSR.[18] Thus it is not surprising that over the last three decades there has been an increasing resentment of counterproductive government intervention in housing, employment, education and other matters to fulfill homogenizing social agenda extraneous to the needs and aspirations of the communities directly effected. Instead of remedying significantly the manifest injustices against which they were deployed on the basis of an abstract state-sanctioned egalitarianism, these policies have generally contributed to a further deterioration and disintegration of struggling communities. Predicated on economic growth (benefiting mostly the wealthy) and of redistribution (benefiting primarily the underclass), these policies leave the bulk of the middle class, which bears the brunt of their consequences, overburdened, disenfranchised and resentful.[19] It is a process not altogether different from the Bolshevik

18. It is not a coincidence that, in analyzing the causes of disintegration in the former USSR and the former Yugoslavia, Veljko Vujacic and Victor Zaslavsky point to the very same social dynamics at work in the US. See "The Causes of Disintegration in the USSR and Yugoslavia," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 120-140.

19. Lasch has carefully reconstructed how liberal attacks on middle class values and institutions in the US has triggered the recent resurgence of populism — especially its New Right variety. Cf. Lasch, *op. cit.*, pp. 476ff.

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elite's mobilization of "workers and poor peasants" to annihilate the aristocracy, the "kulaks" and whatever there was of a nascent middle class in Russia. The result was not only the destruction of agriculture, but also the undermining of all creativity and initiative without which the USSR ended up as one of the world's most conservative and unimaginative societies.

The new populism demands government accountability, institutional reorganization and a redefinition of politics to facilitate participation beyond the limited levels presently available within representative democracy.[20] Yet populism remains a confused notion and, partly as a result, one of the most misunderstood and distorted phenomena in modern politics.[21] While the liberal mass media persists in disparagingly labeling "populist" anything expressing popular sentiments *unmediatized* by certified elites, and middle-brow academics insist on misperceiving this resurgence of populism as short-sighted, right-wing, anti-intellectual and xenophobic — precisely in the way the phenomenon has been historically distorted and eventually codified by leading 1950s liberal ideologues[22] — recent scholarship has exploded most of these myths

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20. That this is neither a particularly novel development nor one limited to the US can be seen in the first line of Ionescu and Gellner, *Populism*, *op. cit.*, where they modify the opening phrase of *The Communist Manifesto* to read that : "A spectre is haunting the world — populism."

21. After attempting to review and classify most of the available literature with the help of Wittgensteinian mystifications such as "family resemblances" and "cluster concepts" in order to develop a satisfactory social-scientific definition of "populism," this is roughly what Margaret Canovan concludes, while wishing that the concept had never been developed in the first place. See her *Populism* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Janovich, 1981), p. 301. For a radically different account, see Lawrence Goodwyn, "Rethinking 'Populism': Paradoxes of Historiography and Democracy," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 37-56.

22. Although such crudely ideological accounts of populism are still predominant in the US (cf. the front page of *The New Republic* of November 25, 1991 with the heading "The New Populism" directly above a picture of David Duke, meant to associate populism with racism) they are rapidly disappearing from serious scholarship. Abroad, however, the situation remains nothing short of disgraceful — even in otherwise respectable academic publications. Thus, a special "dossier" in the French journal *Cosmopolitiques*, No. 18 (February 1991) devoted to the theme "Populisme: Le Mal Européen?" exhibits not only an appalling ignorance of the voluminous literature on the subject (none of it is mentioned), but displays in the process most of the self-contradictory features of late 20th century liberalism. Thus, while grudgingly acknowledging that democracy is "the government of the people," Georges Ayache immediately adds the qualification that this means *representative* democracy since the people's immediate instincts are not to be trusted and, after all, only "competent representatives" can guarantee "freedom, well-being and integrity" (*ibid.* p. 7). Although in an interview (appropriately titled "Le populisme ou le refus de la complexité du monde," p. 50)

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and begun to re-examine the relevant documents and events to draw rather different conclusions. In the wake of Goodwyn's reexamination of the history of 19th century agrarian populism, it is becoming widely acknowledged that the phenomenon — as ambiguous and inarticulate as it usually appears — must be reinterpreted as an essential moment in the unsuccessful attempt to realize what he calls "the democratic promise" against the elitism of a triumphant corporate liberalism.[23]

Contrary to both liberal and conservative conventional wisdom, today's growing interest in populism in the US has very little to do with any backlash against the civil rights movement; a resurgence of traditional prejudices, racist resentment of welfare and other redistributive policies or simply with poor leadership. Rather, as Harry C. Boyte *et al* argue,[24] it has a great deal to do with the grass-roots rejection of the technocratic state developed by the New Deal and institutionalized with the subsequent war mobilization — a rejection which received its first political articulation when this technocratic state began to run into a crisis in the early 1960s[25] and whose most visible expressions were not

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Thierry de Beaucé admits that populism may have to do with "crises of political representation," he insists on branding populists "the declared enemies of representative democracy," notwithstanding the fact that populism has historically sought to remedy precisely these "representational deficits" with *participatory* democracy. At any rate, the whole operation is meant to identify *tout court* populism with Le Pen's National Front, demagoguery, know-nothingism, nostalgic longing for long-gone communities (p. 16), standard anti-intellectualism (p. 22), and the "reduction of the complexity of social life to some of its extremely schematic features" (pp. 24 and 43). While condemning populism as unequivocally "reactionary," the whole dossier turns out to be a tired apology for existing political institutions by calling for a "deepening of our democracy" and envisioning "renewed forms of citizenship (pp. 52-53) — precisely what populists have historically sought. In the entire dossier there is no mention of American populism and the couple of short simplistic articles on Russian and East European populism are concerned almost exclusively with anti-Semitism. For a careful reconstruction of populism's political philosophy — although focused only on early American populism — see Norman Pollack, *op. cit.* The growing literature on the subject is so extensive that it is impossible to cite. For a partial list see Boyte and Riesman, *op. cit.*, pp. 319ff.

23. Lawrence Goodwyn, *Democratic Promise*, *op. cit.*, pp. 542ff. Although he analyzes Kansas populism in dubious class terms, Scott G. McNall comes to roughly similar conclusions in his *The Road to Rebellion: Class Formation and Kansas Populism, 1865-1900* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988).

24. Harry C. Boyte, Heather Booth and Steve Max, *Citizen Action and the New American Populism* (Philadephia: Temple University Press, 1986). Cf. also Harry C. Boyte, *Common Wealth: A Return to Citizen Politics* (New York: The Free Press, 1989). While rich in raw information, Boyte's account is theoretically sloppy, superficial and self-contradictory. Whenever his analysis runs into conceptual problems the narrative fades into the anecdotal mode. As such, it readily feeds into the popular stereotype of populism as a useless theoretical mishmash.

25. Cf. E. J. Dionne, *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1991), pp. Chs. 1 and 2.

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only the rise of the New Left but also Barry Goldwater's campaign in 1964, followed by George Wallace's American Independent Party in 1968, Jimmy Carter's 1976 defeat of the Democratic Party's liberal establishment, up to Ronald Reagan's "revolution" in the 1980s. It presupposes what European political scientists call "transversal politics," which transcend the standard Left/Right division to vindicate local autonomy, traditions and customs against bureaucratic encroachments by external exploiting agencies.

Unfortunately, old mental habits are difficult to shake and populists with New Left backgrounds tend to remain mired in traditional political dogma contraposing the "reactionary" populism of the New Right to their own, new and improved "progressive" brand. In so doing, however, they destroy the originality of populism understood as the vindication of people's *really existing* cultures, traditions and customs. The privileging of "progressive" populism allows them to project onto populism, and thus substitute for it, a Left-liberal Enlightenment ideology, thus perpetuating precisely that same substitutionist elitism Lasch attacks as one of the fundamental flaws of 20th century liberalism.[26] Consequently, their "progressive" populism turns out to be a warmed-over version of codified 1960s New Left ideology (understood not in its early form, as a vindication of participatory democracy, tolerance and axiological heterogeneity, but in its late corrupted version as merely a self-rightous call to make the existing system, arbitrarily redefined according to liberal values, live up to its promises by whatever means necessary).[27] The only possible outcome is another call for the rationalization of existing pathological

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26 For particular examples of how this substitutionist strategy works, see Russell A. Berman, "Popular Culture and Populist Culture," in *Telos* 87 (Spring 1991), pp. 59-70; and "Intellectuals and the Gulf War in Germany and in the United States," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 167-180.

27. Typical of this simplistic approach is the anthology edited by Boyte and Riessman, *The New Populism*, *op. cit.*, which opens with an essay by Goodwyn criticizing the ideology of progress as foreign to populism. Every other essay in the volume, however, proceeds to vindicate "good" progressive populism against "bad" conservative falsifications. Boyte himself acknowledges in the Introduction that populism poses a challenge to both Left and Right, but immediately proceeds along with most of his contributors to associate populism *tout court* with late New Left ideology. The book's "political correctness" is further demonstrated by vacuous discussions of "feminist," "disabled," "minority," etc. versions of populism. That populism aims, first and foremost, at the revitalization and reconstitution of communitarian traditions and customs where such bureaucratic designations make no sense and whose deployment constitute what in Habermasian language amount to strategies to colonize the lifeworld (since communities' internal divisions are not a function of abstract universal determinations but of internalized traditional norms) is readily forgotten in a scatterbrained celebration of populism as "a night in which all cows are black."

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power relations: rendering government more "responsive" and "accountable," without ultimately challenging the structural conditions (technocracy, bureaucracy, professionalism, centralization, axiological pseudo-universalism, etc.) responsible for the social disintegration and the crisis of liberalism.

Unlike its 19th century forerunner, the new populism can no longer pretend to vindicate the interests and lifestyles of a relatively homogeneous "people." Although the US was always an heterogeneous society, in the 19th century, when much of the country was not yet altogether sold on the idea of racial equality and native populations were still being regularly exterminated or confined to remote reservations, WASP hegemony had not yet been challenged in any significant way and marginal groups could not question — and often did not really want to question but rather internalize — the predominant value system. The result was the functional equivalent of a relatively homogeneous constituency. In this sense the populists were not entirely out of line in defending what in retrospect look suspiciously like highly exclusionary nativist positions. This helps explain the not always ungrounded charges of ethnocentrism, anti-Semitism, racism, anti-Catholicism and general xenophobia hurled against populism. Today the new populism must not forget that what is crucial in *e pluribus unum* is that *pluribus* without which the *unum* will have problems remaining such.

It is this predicament that forces the new populism to reconsider the original notion of federalism as an integral part of any program seeking to transcend the antinomies of liberalism and vindicate participatory democracy as necessary for the reconstitution of organic communities. Without that type of federalism all appeals to populist sentiments are doomed to retrace the liberal path to managerialism, depoliticization of public discussion, and the spectacularization of politics. To the extent that all national constituencies are heterogeneous and divided on various issues, any attempt to develop a meaningful national policy will either end up clashing with a substantial segment of this constituency or, in order to appease everyone, whatever national policy is ultimately proposed will have to be so vague and ambiguous as to be politically meaningless. What has to be circumvented is the traditionally megalomaniacal nation-state which, because of its sheer size, rules out the possibility of participatory democracy and the constitution of a new collective consciousness. The task of the new populism is to substitute for the nation-state small autonomous organic communities federalized within a broader framework guaranteeing both cultural particularity and unimpeded economic interaction.

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Multiculturalism as Bureaucratic Populism

Liberal interpretations of populism, even sympathetic ones, have invariably fallen into the trap described over a century ago by Marx when he attacked the classical economists' uncritical usage of the concept "the people" for being guilty of what Adorno later described as "identity thinking." These interpretations naively assume that real people correspond to what the concept of "the people" normally describes, i.e., some homogeneous aggregation of "Americans" exhibiting all the WASP characteristics that have historically been associated with such a designation. As a result they hypostatize and substitute a set of particular populist values above and beyond all others, thus becoming vulnerable to charges of cultural imperialism and Eurocentrism.[28] Without any further concrete determinations concerning their particular cultures, habitats, languages, religions, ethnic origin, etc. "the people" remains an empty abstraction upon which to project arbitrary universal characteristics. By calling for concrete determinations, of course, Marx sought to clear the way for and legitimate his own favorite "derminations," i.e., class distinctions, as ontological features of reality. The point here is that the question whether significant differences do or do not obtain within a given population is never just an empirical nor even a theoretical but, first and foremost, a political one. Whether someone is a Croat or a Yugoslav, or whether it matters, cannot be established once and for all simply by looking at the facts. It requires a prior political determination of what will constitute relevant facts.

Marx' concrete "determinations" are ultimately a function of socioeconomic practices informally developed over time and eventually sedimented in the collective consciousness of the particular communities they come to constitute. Within the canonical interpretations of most Marxist traditions and against the background of the devastating impact of the rise of capitalism and of the industrial revolution some of these practices, i.e., those related to production, have been privileged

28. Even careful critics such as Dionne (*op. cit.*) fall into this trap when, after having gone to great pains to describe many of the irreconcilable issues that split the American electorate, in the last chapter of his book he tries to pull a rabbit out of his hat in the form of "the American political tradition," allegedly able to totalize magically all constituencies and reconcile all differences. Such reconciliations and totalizations can and have been successfully carried out by astute politicians for a long time, but at the price of depoliticizing politics and thus unintentionally pointing to this state of affairs as providing the answer to the question Dionne uses as the title of his book. Other attempts to recycle analogous republican politics, such as Lasch's, are more realistic and, consequently, end up with pessimistic conclusions concerning their chances of success.

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as determining all others. Such a reading was encouraged by Marx himself, who spent most of his latter years reconstructing the logic of capital as the essence of modern historical development. Yet, to the extent that all these practices are ontogenetic and therefore inextricably connected with intersubjectivity, they constitute a *praxis* of which labor and production in general are only a special case.[29] They are always embedded in specific territorial and cultural contexts within which they receive their meaning as integral parts of a particular *nomos*.[30] Caught within the logic of his own account of the irresistible universalizing function of capitalism, Marx uncritically assumed the eventual totalization of all remaining *nomoi* into communist society, thus

29. It is not an accident that, in his struggle against what eventually became the predominant philosophical positions of the Second and Third International, Antonio Labriola redefined Marxism as "the philosophy of praxis." Although Gramsci developed this approach in terms of what he sought to articulate as the particularities of national life and popular culture, the whole effort shipwrecked in subsequent crude economistic reinterpretations of "cultural hegemony" as the equivalent of successful propaganda and of *praxis* as politically determined labor, i.e., as organizing. At any rate, Gramsci's project of cultural hegemony was an attempt to rationalize the traditional lifeworld, the existing *nomos*, on the assumption that such a rationalization would naturally take place along Marxist lines — an intellectualistic illusion not altogether different from Habermas' hope that the defense against the colonization of the lifeworld will automatically result in the universalization of the purposive rationality allegedly inherent in undistorted communicative practices. Cf. Paul Piccone, *Italian Marxism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1983).

30. Although originally articulated by Heraclitus at the dawn of Western philosophy as the divine world order (Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture* [New York: Oxford University Press,1965], pp. 151-184), *nomos* reappears in contemporary political theory through Carl Schmitt, who traces it back to the Sophists, before Cicero mistranslated it as *lex*, thus occluding its territorial, communitarian and traditional connotations. Schmitt, however, specifically articulated the concept in terms of the dissolution of the *jus publicum Europaeum* and its implications for his particular discipline, constitutional and international law. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1978). In his essay on "Nomos — Nahme — Name," [in Siegfried Behn, ed., *Der beständige Aufbruch: Festschrift für Erich Przywara* (Nuremberg: Glock und Ludz, 1957)], however, Schmitt traces language itself back to *nomos* and thus prefigures the Wittgensteinian themes of the *Lebensformen* and "language games," and Foucault's notion of *geneology* as radical alternatives to abstract enlightenment universalism — what post-modernists call "logocentrism" and the elitist managerial ideology of late liberalism. Cf. also Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert*, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-317. Ulmen emphasizes how for Schmitt the concept of *nomos* unfolds in three stages: land appropriation, division and production. Its last configuration corresponds to Marx' notion of "the mode of production" without, however, following the orthodox Marxist degradation of the extra-economic "superstructure" to the level of an epiphenomenon. A populist concept of *nomos* would combine both the Marxist base and superstructure without serializing its particular manifestation within the unilinear theory of history dogmatically accepted by both Marxism and liberalism.

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forgetting the ineradicable cultural constitution of his social individual, no matter how much he may farm in the morning, engage in social criticism in the afternoon and watch CNN in the evening. Other, more conservative 19th century thinkers (often engaged in defending aristocratic rule against the democratizing, universalizing and homogenizing implications of the French Revolution) took traditional *nomoi* as the foundation of nations which, in turn, totalized and formalized the organic relations they embodied into states.[31] Unfortunately, as a result of unexpected socio-economic disruptions, none of these national projects ever materialized. Thus there do not seem to be too many nations in existence today that fit this stringent description. At any rate, since WWI and the collapse of the *jus publicum Europaeum* it has become impossible to conceive of nations in this fashion since any effort to constitute them along these lines results in the marginalization and disenfranchisement of whatever minorities happen to inhabit the national territory. The result has usually been civil war, whenever the minorities are able to resist national homogenization, or occasionally genocide, when the minorities are too weak to fight back.

Today all nations are culturally heterogeneous and, as a result, their particular states find it increasingly difficult to reflect any particular *national* values, traditions or customs. Modern states are caught in the paradox of having to embody concrete values derived from some particular *nomos*, while their grounding in heterogeneous societies commits them to axiological neutrality and prevents them from admitting the privileging of any one *nomos* over all others. They can only claim to codify formal relations among abstract individuals within a minimalist axiological horizon able to serialize, without actually integrating various residual and often conflicting *nomoi*. But the very designation of abstract individuality as the fundamental social unit, or what exactly constitutes individuality and citizenship, betrays a commitment to a potential *nomos* reflecting the interests of intellectuals: Enlightenment values and, subsequently, New Class ideology. What is especially problematic in the US case is that the particular variation of this general Northern European outlook, the WASP ideology that became embodied in the federal

31. Some subsequent articulations of Savigny's ideas focused on the *Volksgeist* and contributed significantly to 20th century racism and National Socialism. This outcome, however, is only one historical possibility among many. The alternatives are not limited to a contraposition of the abstract universalism of the Enlightenment and the irrational particularism of most 20th century conservative thought. For a possible synthesis along federal lines, see Paul Piccone and G. Ulmen, "Schmitt's 'Testament' . . ." *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28; and Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert*, *op. cit.*, pp. 74ff.

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Constitution and, after the Civil War, determined the structure of the US as a nation, includes plurality, tolerance and autonomy as integral parts. Because of the growing demographic heterogenization resulting from both voluntary and, earlier, involuntary immigration, the original American identity necessitated its self-denial in the very process of becoming objectified in a nation-state. When the US as a nation began to codify its federal Constitution into the welfare state this paradoxical predicament resulted in an axiologically minimalist project whose realization presupposed the prior homogenization of its constituency. In carrying out this project of cultural homogenization, however, the welfare state did not generate a new *nomos* — since *nomoi* cannot be created by bureaucratic fiat — but only extended the existing one while having to deny its very existence.

In discussing the US in the closing pages of his *Verfassungslehre* (1928), Schmitt pointed out that the federal government could not recognize minorities as political entities since their claim to embody a particular *nomos* implied that they were nations *in nuce* and therefore incompatible with the existing and developing American nation.[32] The only approach he envisioned at that time was the one actually being followed by the government, i.e., to regard all members of these minorities merely as abstract individuals like everyone else. In the late 1920s such a solution was still viable only to the extent that the US was still in the early phases of transition from a federation *strictu sensu* to a nation. But as a contractual intra-national document — even if an inconsistent one based on *democratic* foundations ("We, the people . . ." instead of "We, the states . . .") — the Constitution could not substitute for a national *nomos*. Even the most imaginative readings of the Bill of Rights could yield little more in the way of substantive values than the protection of a few rights of abstract individuals and the pursuit of happiness operationalized into consumerism. Thus it is not surprising that the final product of this long and painful process of building a nation out of the original federation, accelerated during the shift from entrepreneurial to state-organized capitalism under conditions of severe economic crisis, turned out to be a technocratic redistributive welfare state.

Lacking a viable axiological foundation clearly defining its mandate beyond a vague injunction to safeguard the stability of the system, the welfare state could not avoid remaking the constituency in its own image. Thus it continued the process of homogenizing and politically deactivating the populace not only in order to clientize and control it but also

32. Carl Schmitt, *Verfassungslehre* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), pp. 388-391.

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to create a market of homogeneous consumers for a state-regulated capitalism predicated on the deployment of new mass production technologies and a correspondingly homogenized labor force to meet the personnel requirements of the new system. The unintended consequence of this strategy, however, has been the deterioration of that sector of the population which could not, for whatever reason, participate in this project of rationalization and homogenization into state-dependent clients unable and/or unwilling to function as autonomous individuals; the transformation of the former middle class with ready access to educational institutions and professional skills primarily into a managerial elite supervising these new welfare state clients; and the upgrading of the old working class to real or imagined middle class status, to bear the costs and consequences of these developments. As long as the welfare state, through whatever legitimate or politically fraudulent means, could guarantee a steady growth and relatively high standads of living, populist discontent with cultural homogenization and the debilitating impact of state penetration of the lifeworld could be contained as marginal ideological disturbances or integrated by existing institutional mechanisms. This is essentially what has happened since the New Deal. But in a context of prolonged economic stagnation and growing cultural impoverishment no longer buffered by increasingly eroded familial or autonomous community networks — a distinct possibility for the foreseeable future — popular dissatisfaction translated into populist resentment may eventually force the existing system into undertaking substantial institutional reforms.[33]

The crisis of the welfare state has not gone unnoticed by the technocracy entrusted with managing it. Already in the early 1960s spontaneous ghetto uprisings in practically every major American city by disenfranchised blacks made it clear not only that the welfare state had lost touch with most of its alleged clientele, but also that government policies had undermined the various targeted constituencies' ability to represent themselves and thereby participate in the general project of

33. This is precisely what happened to bureaucratic collectivist regimes which deployed similar strategies of social rationalization. The Soviet Union withered when a terminal economic crisis precipitated by the growing irrationality of a system no longer run by more or less autonomous individuals but by state-dependent *apparatchiki* gradually curtailed the central government's redistributive options. Although the current resurgence of populism is not predicated on standard theories of the economic crash (*Zusammenbruchstheorie*) — a trademark of the Second International's determinist outlook — to the extent that economic crises vividly document the system's shortcomings they tend to lend legitimacy to populist critiques.

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social reorganization.[34] The advanced disintegration of residual *nomoi* in those sectors of the population most directly affected by state policies of cultural homogenization had become dysfunctional to the very running of a welfare state, which still projected the final mediatized result to be some sort of new national *nomos*. The technocracy seems to have realized that no new American *nomoi* can come into being by bureaucratic fiat: they can only be constituted through the spontaneous interaction of people in organic communities. At any rate, from the mid-1960s the technocracy has reversed its Americanization strategy and encouraged autonomous and government-sponsored reconstitution of disintegrated residual *nomoi* as a precondition to reestablish its own internal rationality. Such direct sociological interventions to reconstitute disintegrated or disintegrating communities with the assistance of professional organizers such as Saul Alinsky, the Office of Economic Opportunity encouraging and funding opposition groups to generate regulatory feed-back for an insulated and therefore irresponsive bureaucratic apparatus, the almost obsessive government supervised voter registration campaigns in the South to ensure the election of truly representative officials, etc. were all primarily bureaucratic attempts to reconstitute disintegrated *nomoi* to rationalize and legitimate an increasingly faltering welfare state. What this meant was forfeiting any hope of constituting any new national *nomos* other than one hypostatizing the bureaucratic apparatus as a permanent mediator among a myriad of conflicting artificially reconstituted traditional groups.

Unable to enforce the internalization of its mandates, this Great Society and post-Great Society welfare state strategy succeeded only in generating artificial negativity which, to the extent that it does not reflect the spontaneous expression of internalized norms, remains a

34. Adolph L. Reed Jr. has explained these events precisely in terms of the bureaucratic destruction of residual *nomoi* understood not as parts of some mythical African culture buried in the collective unconscious but as internalized community practices developed over decades of struggling against institutionalized racism in the South. Cf. his "Black Particularity Reconsidered," in *Telos* (Spring 1979), pp. 71-93. From this, however, over a decade later Reed opportunistically concludes that, since racial oppression was part and parcel of government policies, it is the government's responsibility to remedy its consequences through more affirmative action and other programs which have, at best, only benefited a small upwardly mobile black middle class. See Adolph Reed Jr. and Julian Bond, "Equality: Why We Can't Wait," in *The Nation* (Dec. 9, 1991), pp. 733-737. Since the government cannot reconstitute any residual Afro-American *nomos*, Reed's call for more government intervention in the black community will probably succeed in securing a few more affirmative action appointments in prestigious universities, while contributing to further disintegration and dependence in the urban ghettos.

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bureaucratic phenomenon extending and intensifying rather than containing and correcting bureaucratic involution. What these strategies succeeded in doing was primarily to extend the bureaucratic apparatus by creating a professional New Class counter-bureaucratic elite both to respond to and co-opt growing populist resentment by providing this opposition with officially sanctioned representative institutions. In Adornian terms the main outcome of this new version of the dialectic of enlightenment was to extend the domination of the concept in the form of an attempted bureaucratic reconstitution of cultural heterogeneity to legitimate and rationalize the welfare state. The project failed because these cultural traits did not denote dynamic living practices internalized by the various communities they constituted, but embellished memories having little relation to concrete social realities other than as legitimating ideologies for a rising multicultural bureaucracy in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, far from representing any spontaneous grass-roots phenomenon, multiculturalism is primarily another symptom of the involution of the welfare state.

But the welfare state cannot coexist with multiculturalism. Any serious vindication of particular cultures must resuscitate or invent autonomous *nomoi* whose articulation requires the constitution of corresponding nations with their own states — the kind of project undertaken with catastrophic consequences in Northern Ireland, Lebanon and, more recently, in what was Yugoslavia. On the other hand, anything short of nationhood, predicated on a plethora of conflicting criteria of language, race, gender, class, ethnicity, sexual orientation, etc., can only yield pressure groups advocating artificial particularity as career advancement strategies for often poorly qualified would-be state functionaries pretending to represent constituencies never substantially affected by these dynamics.[35] Thus, as a medicine to cure the ills of the welfare state, multiculturalism is either too strong, to the point that it threatens to kill the patient, or not strong enough, in which case it is socially irrelevant. In the first case the result is Yugoslavia, Lebanon, etc. In the second case, which more closely resembles the way the problem is articulated in the US, weak multiculturalism fails to provide alternative axiological foundations necessary for autonomous individuality and community reconstitution. Worse yet, it actually intensifies the crisis of the welfare state both by actually encouraging conformity while advocating an enforced diversity, and by legitimating contradictory and irreconcilable criteria for redistribution that render extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, any equitable implementation.

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Post-Liberal Populism

As bureaucratically-coopted populism, multiculturalism cannot remedy the welfare state's axiological deficits because the reified heterogeneity it legitimates does not correspond to any spontaneously lived practices and only seeks to substitute for the administrative imposition of an *extraneous* homogeneity an equally *extraneous* heterogeneity. The problem with the earlier Americanization strategy, however, was not homogeneity as such. Rather, it had to do with the fact that it was administratively imposed. These efforts in the past half century have tended to accelerate the disintegration of remaining *nomoi* without actually substituting new ones, thus leaving in their wake a state of normlessness and community disintegration legitimating further bureaucratic intervention and the increasing tendential bifurcation of society into a New Class managerial elite and its disenfranchised clients — the liberal coalition that has displaced the traditional working class as the main constituency of the American Democratic Party.

No longer confident of being able to constitute technocratically a new *nomos* defining an American nation smoothly run by an efficient bureaucratic apparatus of New Class professionals, the welfare state's sponsorship of multiculturalism ends up relegitimating existing relations of domination, privilege and socio-economic inequality by redimensioning the role of the central goverment.[35] Having feudalized culture into a *bellum omnium contra omnes*, the welfare state — itself pretending to proportionately represent the country's racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious etc. make-up — seeks to become the only neutral mediator able to adjudicate among the permanently warring factions in managing and redistributing the fiscally appropriated social surplus. But to the extent that this process of artificial multiculturalization directly affects only a small, although highly vocal and visible, upwardly mobile segment of the bureaucratic apparatus, leaving the rest of the newly designated cultural minorities as disempowered and alienated as ever, it cannot generate the kind of political constituency whose support it needs to remain in power. Growing populist opposition to its costs and questionable practices threatens to translate into demands for institutional reforms to redimension and decentralize this increasingly counterproductive and self-destructive bureaucratic apparatus, and thus to re-empower local communities to the point of creating conditions within which new *regional nomoi* can actually be reconstituted.

35. Cf. "Special Section on Affirmative Action in Academia" in *Telos* 86 (Winter 1990-91), pp. 103-140.

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Rather than reviving or inventing devisive idyllic visions of ethnic, gender or cultural particularity, the new populism focuses on the creation of new *nomoi* in terms of developing modes of interacting among people in the process of negotiating and renegotiating everyday life.

The new populism will have to part ways with its earlier manifestations precisely in this: it can no longer assume a pregiven national context and will have to refederalize the political system as a precondition for reconstituting local communities and concrete *nomoi* able to relegitimate the democratic ethos. This means that cultural specificity will have to be defined entirely in *territorial* terms rather than ethnic, racial, religious, linguistic, and other criteria. Unresolvable within the instrumental rationality of a large centralized welfare state, the question of conflicting *nomoi* is more easily solved within small contexts where *new nomoi* can be constituted through direct interaction among people. After all, *nomoi* are never given once and for all, but are living entities constantly modified in the process of being articulated. If the significant political units are de-totalized into smaller ones allowing for concrete interaction and will-formation, then new *nomoi* can develop out of the old ones, as they always have in the past, in particular localities, as a result of the concrete interaction of various groups.

Civil wars in Lebanon, Yugoslavia and Northern Ireland are largely the results of efforts to universalize particularistic *nomoi* at the level of the nation-state where large chunks of the constituency have to be necessarily disenfranchised or marginalized rather than organically integrated in new formations which, to the extent that they are locally developed by the various peoples themselves, are automatically internalized. Interaction among differing cultures can never be codified by government policies without perpetuating indefinitely existing social divisions. While there is no guarantee that local communities will always invariably resolve smoothly whatever internal differences obtain, it is clear that bureaucratic imposition is no alternative — as can be seen from the resurfacing in the former USSR and in Eastern Europe of all the conflicts and internal divisions that communist governments repressed for decades by authoritarian decrees.

At any rate, notwithstanding the fact that the confusion of most recent discussions of the resurgence of populism have tended to substantiate standard liberal claims that it is the politically impotent expression of nativist resentment — a kind of anti-modernist reaction likely to wither in any serious confrontation with other more rational political positions — a federal, anti-bureaucratic populism may be on

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more solid theoretical ground than standard liberal ideology predicated on the obsolete nation-state. As such, it presents a serious challenge to welfare state liberalism and, in an international context characterized by the dissolution of hitherto stable nations such as the USSR, Yugoslavia and even Canada, warrants careful scrutiny. Even West European nations, paradigms of national stability, are increasingly confronting the same sort of political crisis typical of all nation-states. The specter of populism haunts Western as much as Eastern Europe. While it is too early to prognosticate about possible developments, it is possible to examine one recent and still barely noticed political phenomenon which not only embodies the characteristics of a new federal populism but has also been registering spectacular electoral successes: the Lombard League in Northern Italy.

The Lombard League's New Federal Populism

Explicitly opposed to Italy as a unitary nation-state, the Lombard League rejects the traditional post-Enlightenment plotting of the political spectrum along Left-Right axes, calls for the break-up of the country into three more viable sub-units, the abolition of existing party politics, the decentralization of the parties' *de facto* power base — the welfare state, and the constitution of new local *nomoi*. Unlike earlier populist movements originating in socially and economically backward regions such as the US South or the Russian countryside, and appealing to the least educated and most economically disadvantaged sectors of the population, the Lombard League has its roots in the most prosperous and industrially advanced part of Italy, draws most of its support from a rapidly growing, well-educated, middle-class and youthful constituency, and is being increasingly emulated by parallel political formations throughout the country. Although practically unknown outside Italy and generally dismissed by traditional parties and politicians as a temporary aberration, the one serious study of it so far has unambiguously concluded that not only is the Lombard League here to stay, but it is likely to grow significantly in the foreseable future.[36]

Founded in 1982, the Lombard League takes its name from the opposition to Roman imperialism by the Gallic people inhabiting Lombardy at the time of Hannibal's invasion of Italy. Finally vanquished

36. Renato Mannheimer, ed., *La Lega Lombarda* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1991), p. 194. Since the publication of this work, the League registered spectacular electoral successes in the fall 1991 local elections to the point of gaining a relative majority over all other traditional political parties in Brescia, probably Italy's most industrialized and prosperous city.

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around 186 B.C. by the Romans, who eventually proceeded to integrate and assimilate the whole region into the flourishing Roman Empire under Julius Ceasar, the League was briefly reconstituted to fight against Frederick II in 1237, at which time it was once again defeated. In both instances the League stood for the kind of local autonomy that has been historically associated with prosperity and well-being, which declined whenever the region was forcibly subjugated by broader political units. It is this appeal to territorial autonomy that also characterizes the present League and defines the corrupt, wasteful and generally inept Rome-based Italian central government as its primary enemy.[37] According to Renato Mannheimer, one of the main factors contributing significantly to the League's formation has to do with the collapse of the Catholic and Communist sub-cultures which had dominated Italian politics since WWII,[38] and the growing irrelevance of traditional Left/Right divisions.

Although Catholicism remains strong at a subjective, idiosyncratic level, the growing secularization of society at large has clearly taken its toll. After the overwhelmingly onesided outcome of the divorce referendum it became obvious that official Catholic values and policies no longer have much direct political bearing on a still largely Catholic population and that the Christian Democratic Party was simply another center party concerned primarily with its own political clientele and its actual power base, the bureaucratic apparatus. An even worse fate befell communist ideology after the failure of Eurocommunism and the much heralded "historical compromise" whereby the Communist Party formally accepted the liberal rules of the game, rejected outright any residual notion of the dictatorship of the proletariat and, for all practical purposes, became just another run-of-the-mill social-democratic party. Notwithstanding notorious ambiguities about its relation to parliamentary democracy, the Italian Communist Party had always thrived on the pretense that it provided a qualitative alternative to "bourgeois" politics. After the formal break with Moscow, well before the beginning of *perestroika* and in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, the Party gradually lost its historically distinct space within

37. *Ibid.*, p. 32. This negative evaluation of the performance of the Italian central government is by no means limited to the League, but is widespread. For a similar analysis from a New Class perspective concerned with merely rationalizing the existing system by substituting a decentralized "welfare society" for the present "welfare state," see Ugo Ascoli, "Dopo il Welfare State all'taliana," in *Problemi del Socialismo*, No. 5 (Rome: Francoangeli, 1992), pp. 157-175.

38. Mannheimer, *op. cit.* pp. 20-21.

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the Italian political spectrum and simply came to duplicate other social-democratic parties which by that time had themselves become purely technocratic organizations with no particular ideological predilections. At that point the Party found itself without whatever attraction it may once have had both for that more idealistic part of its electorate still longing for radical changes and for its more traditional working class sectors for which sovietization remained irreversibly associated with modernization, equality and social justice. Thus it is no accident that with the beginning of the disintegration of the Soviet Union the Party has formally changed its name and split into two slowly dwindling splinter groups representing respectively these two different traditional constituencies.

Coming at a time of increasing political corruption, criminality and normlessness — and actually closely associated with these phenomena — the collapse of the Catholic and Communist sub-cultures left a vacuum in the national consciousness which the Lombard League has rushed to fill by appealing to a new collective identity[39] predicated on regional *nomoi*. It is its focus on territorial identity and, consequently, on the need to re-federalize a national structure that is slowly losing whatever original identity it may have once had that sharply distinguishes the League from other earlier traditional populist formations. This is the result both of political choices as well as of practical necessities. Since during the past five centuries Lombardy has been under successive Spanish, French and Austrian domination, and more recently has experienced considerable immigration, even if it wanted to the League could not possibly have been able to constitute itself around ethnic, linguistic or religious criteria.[40] Consequently, although

39. *Ibid.*, p. 32.

40. Cf. Gianfranco Pasquino, "Una Lega Contro i Partiti," in *Rivista dei Libri* (May 1991), pp. 32-35. Although early on there were some attempts to focus on local dialects and anti-Southern sentiments as the League's defining traits, they were readily dropped in the League's first formal Congress in 1989 in favor of a broadening of the criteria of who constitutes the people to include all of the region's residents. Cf. Roberto Biorcio, "La Lega Come Attore Politico: Dal Federalismo al Populismo Regionalista," in Mannheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 68 and 81. It is obvious why such multicultural traits could not possibly work. Consider Milan, Lombardy's capital: there, until very recently, the residual aristocracy could be found speaking primarily French, the local working class conversing mostly in Milanese dialect, and only the middle class transacting in a more or less standard Italian. As Biorcio points out, along with all other regions today Lombardy cannot claim any distinct cultural particularity: "The existence of an autonomous Lombard culture based on a specific language and on specific traditions . . . is presently hard to find. The survival of ancient local traditions is . . . restricted to a very limited area." *Ibid.*, p. 68. It is precisely this heterogeneity of traditions and cultures that prevents the League from simply attempting to recycle some real or imagined

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exhibiting all the typical characteristics of classical populist movements,[41] the League differs from previous versions in its emphasis on federalism and the reconstruction of viable communities locally and independently of any central authority such as the welfare state. As such, this federal populism avoids most of the pitfalls which historically prevented earlier manifestations of this phenomenon from translating into anything more than scattered and relatively impotent protest movements. Within a genuine federation the weight of the whole can be brought to bear on the constituting parts only under exceptional, well-defined conditions, thus preventing the homogenizing center from obliterating the particularity of the heterogeneous parts. To the extent that, in making their case, nationalist versions of populism, whether the New Right variety or the Azerbaijani, tend to universalize their particularity, they are usually defeated either by a center presenting itself as the protector of pluralism or by other hegemonic groups.

The Lombard League rejects outright the obsolete concept of the nation-state in favor of an integral federalism predicated on the constitution of new *nomoi* and the reconstitution of local communities as the social space within which to practice participatory democracy. Thus the main totalizing enemy is explicitly identified as the Roman bureaucracy and the central government and, according to Paolo Natale, voters' identification with the League is a function of "the lived solidarity of the subjects as an instrument to reactivate group identity and social recognition."[42] This vindication of grass-roots social communities as the constitutive units of a new federal populism confronts the problem of alienation and encourages reintegration of tendentially abstract individuals within organic communities conducive to responsible citizenship and a healthy social life. But in order to do so it must sharply define territoriality as decisive for the new populist identity. Since all political formations are constituted not only by what they include but, even more importantly, by what they exclude, the League's regional identity lends itself to standard misunderstandings. From the viewpoint of the predominant liberal conventional wisdom predicated on a society of abstract individuals externally aggregated

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vision of the past and commits it to the creation and development of new *nomoi* able to translate new needs and modes of interaction into new forms of social consciousness in a context where the Italian welfare state, the last vestige of an obsolete, residual 19th century nation-state, has shown itself clearly incapable of carrying out such a task.

41. Biorcio, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

42. Paolo Natale, "Lega Lombarda e Insediamento Territoriale: Un'Analisi Ecologica," in Mannheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 118ff.

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by a technocratic state, it is all too easy to misinterpret the League's exclusionary criteria predicated on territoriality as merely a recycling of nationalism, with all the racist, xenophobic connotations historically attached with such a notion — especially when all of Western Europe is becoming inundated with Third World or East European immigrants.

It is not surprising, therefore, that from the very beginning the Lombard League has been accused of racism and associated with Le Pen's National Front in France,[43] even though the Italian political situation is clearly not comparable to the French and careful voter surveys have shown that the League's territorial rooting is by no means the flip side of any hostility towards immigrants and other outsiders.[44] In fact, many of the League's members are themselves Southern Italian immigrants who have managed to establish solid roots in the region[45] To the extent that one of the League's main goals is the constitution of new *nomoi*, which at this point exist only as what Ernst Bloch would have called "the not yet," i.e., in vague communitarian longings, rough

43. Cf. Giorgio Bocca, *La Disunità d'Italia* (Milan: Garzanti, 1990); and Luciano Balbo and Ludovico Marconi, *I Razzismi Impossibili* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1990). For a particularly superficial and misinformed account, see Marco Martiniello and Paul Kazim, "Italy: Two Perspectives. Racism in Paradise?" in *Race & Class* (January-March 1991), Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 79-89. Kazim identifies the League as "an extreme right-wing group advocating separatism for the rich Lombardy region . . . and fanning popular resentment against immigrants." As evidence both Martiniello and Kazim provide a conspiratorial account of one of several incidents of the police break-up of a make-shift encampment of illegal jobless immigrants, allegedly to appease the extreme Right, i.e., the League. The clear implication is that these immigrants are essential to the hidden economy, but the racist local population is unwilling to treat them fairly and pay them a living wage. What actually happens is that illegal immigrants from disintegrating, poor Third World countries do make their way to industrial areas with occasional labor shortages in the more manual occupations, and local, usually social-democratic, authorities not only allow immigrants to come in but also to set up make-shift encampments with inhuman living conditions. The severe social problems and overload of already inadequate existing services these encampments create are directly felt by the local people, but generally ignored by the normally inept and unresponsive central government and local authorities. Most of the time the only way local residents can attract the authorities' attention and contain the various health and other social problems by providing the people in the encampments with minimal help is through acts of civil disobedience which are immediately perceived as racist. While some of the people involved may, in fact, be racist, by and large most League supporters want only a clear governmental policy regulating immigration so that those immigrants who do come are provided with at least minimal support. For a much more balanced analysis of the League which discusses most of these issues without distorting its program or its outlook, see Dwayne Woods, "Les Ligues Régionales en Italie," forthcoming in *Revue Française de Science Politique*.

44. Biorcio, who has specifically studied this question through extensive surveys of the Lombard League's constituency, has concluded that "the correlation of localism with anti-Southern feelings is statistically insignificant." *Ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

45. Natale, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

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territorial contours and, negatively, in opposition to the central bureaucratic apparatus, the League's identity is likely to remain associated with its immediately visible exclusionary criteria and therefore vulnerable to charges of racism and ethnocentrism — especially from the traditional Left.

This adamant opposition from the traditional Left explains why the League has been and will continue to be seen as part of the Right by those whose political myopia is rapidly approaching blindness. Recent voter surveys show that the League's latest successes have been mostly at the expense of Center and Left-Center parties such as the Socialist, Social Democrats and the Christian Democrats.[46] Much less of an inroad has been made within the more traditional Left associated with the ruins of the former Communist Party. The reasons for this are not difficult to locate. Still committed to the central plan as the only way to rationalize and modernize the anarchy of capitalist production, and to a paternalistic redistributive bureaucratic apparatus as the only way to ensure social justice, the traditional Left can only shrink in horror on hearing about the League's program of practically demolishing the central government and decentralizing all social functions. Although the League consciously locates itself beyond any Left/Right division, its animating spirit is rooted both in a much older but largely forgotten Left anarchist tradition, as well as in the most advanced "post-Fordist" industrial practices which, not by accident, are very congenial to older anarchist forms of economic organization dating back to Proudhon. To a great extent, the unprecedented prosperity of Northern Italian regions today is largely a function of the gradual post-Fordization of production that has been underway over the past two decades. In many respects, the project of political federalization corresponds to a parallel project of industrial federalization which has already been implemented in some advanced sectors of Central Europe for some time.[47] Within such a context of industrial rationalization and decentralization, the old Left vision of huge factories with thousands of workers producing standardized products is definitely an anachronism.

The "transversal" character of the League can best be seen in the kind of people who vote for it. Although they come from practically

46. *Ibid.*, p. 107. Cf. also Umberto Brindani's interview with Umberto Bossi, the League's leader, "Macché Piccone. Bulldozer!" in *Panorama* (December 8, 1991), p. 45.

47. This is roughly what is happening within large multinational corporations such as IBM, which are slowly coming to realize how the myth of centralization and bureaucratization threatens to drive them into bankruptcy.

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every strata of society, they are generally younger than the average voter, middle-class, well-educated, and entrepreneurial in orientation.[48] Far from being on the margins of society or the victims of social dislocations, the League membership has been described as an integral part (*lo zoccolo duro*) of the system.[49] When the League electorate is broken down according to classes, the only significant difference that could be found was that while the working class tended to emphasize regionalism as the League's most important feature, the better educated middle class focused instead on anti-bureaucratic opposition.[50] In a study of the large number of fringe sympathizers likely to vote for the League in future elections, Ilvio Diamanti came up with roughly the same results, with an "efficientist" wing of young people, middle class, "post-materialist," anti-party and anti-bureaucratic, and a "particularist" wing composed of older, working class, Catholic voters coming usually from right-wing parties.[51]

Since the Leagues are a political response to structural dysfunctions typical of all Italian regions and, more broadly but to a lesser extent, of all Western European regions, what all this means is the likelihood of the growth of similar regional Leagues throughout Italy and Europe in the immediate future. As comparable problems of bureaucratic inefficiency, unresponsiveness, waste, corruption and, most importantly, axiological deficits resulting from the vacuity of liberal democracy's Enlightenment universalism intensify, the kind of federal populism being developed by the Lombard League may well become the model for similar new political formations.

The paradox today is that while the disintegration of liberalism and the welfare state is triggering grass-roots phenomena such as the Lombard League in Northern Italy and corresponding populist responses elsewhere, Western Europe is attempting to unify along precisely the kind of standard welfare state parameters which are proving to be increasingly bankrupt, as they are predicated on the primacy of member nations and central bureaucratic authority. The question today is whether a new federal populism will proliferate fast enough to redirect the project of West European unification along decentralized federal lines and prevent Europe from reinventing Washington.

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48. Renato Mannheimer, "Chi Vota per la Lega?" in Mannheimer, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-134.
49. Biorcio, *op. cit.*, p. 34.
50. Mannheimer, *op. cit.*, pp.1476-147.
51. Ilvio Diamanti, "Una Tipologia dei Simpatizzanti della Lega," in Mannheimer ed., *op. cit.*, pp. 178-182.

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Modell Deutschland *and the New Europe*

Andrei S. Markovits and Simon Reich

Although the end of 1992 will mark the beginning of the European Internal Market, 1989 might well be considered the year of Europe. In an earlier age it might even have been called an *annus mirabilis*. Not only did it see a fundamental reorganization in existing power relations in state and society, a change in elites, the redefinition of public and private, and the introduction of a new economic order in Eastern Europe, it also restored Western Europe to its former contours if not its former borders. It was the year of Germany, which saw the long awaited unification of both the divided capital and state that was the most conspicuous expression of the Cold War and a divided Europe. The euphoria in Western Europe and the West in general resulting from the reputed victory of capitalism over communism, however, also reintroduced the "German question."

The traditional formulation of this *problematique* has always started from the working assumption that Germany's elites have sought to expand their economic and territorial base beyond their universally-defined geographic borders. Such motives were assigned to Germany's leadership from Bismarck to Hitler. The corresponding, responsive role of other major European powers was always to constrain this purposive, imperialist behavior — either through alliances designed to balance German power in the period before 1945, or through multilateral institutions such as NATO and the EC designed to coopt and thus constrain Germany in the postwar period. Germany has therefore been at worst a traditional adversary and, at best, an unreliable ally.

Before 1945 Germany's imperialist ambitions were always subdued

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by the constraints imposed by its domestic resource base. The country lacked the capacity to prevail in a long military struggle against its neighbors because it could not muster superior logistical capabilities. In the postwar period such a strategy was never even contemplated as Germany's leaders have always been content to subordinate any expansionist tendencies to trading concerns, imbued with a profound sense of their country's culpable past. They therefore imposed strictly-defined limitations on Germany's international role. This latter tendency was encapsulated in the description of Germany as an "economic giant and a political dwarf."

Now, while Germany's elites seek to limit their country's ambitions, its neighbors are consciously pursuing policies that have the effect of enhancing German power. The result of this inversion will be a new German hegemony in Europe — already largely achieved in the West and soon to be realized in the East. Furthermore, while the evolution of Germany's relations with its Western neighbors has provided the initial springboard for hegemony, the historical, cultural and linguistic advantages that Germany enjoys with its Eastern neighbors compared to other EC members will cement its Eastern European advantage and further help consolidate its Western position. Without conscious effort to achieve hegemony, perhaps even consciously resisting such expansion, the Germans will come to dominate Europe to the degree (if not in the manner and not for the same purpose) intended by prior generations.

This inversion can largely be accounted for by a series of structural and ideological factors. A series of European institutions originally developed to constrain German expansion have failed to do so. Germany is now the central pillar around which those institutions militate. The most crucial example is the EC. The Germans are the prime beneficiaries of the structure of such relations in both absolute and relative terms, and they invest substantial sums to maintain that system. Similar arguments can be made for German involvement in other European, non-economic institutions, such as TREVI (Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism, Violence, Intemational), Europe's key intergovernmental system of cooperation in dealing with anti-terrorist policies instituted in 1975 as a result of a German initiative.[1]

Accounts focusing purely on these factors, however, are inadequate because they ignore an ideological component essential for explaining

1. See Peter Katzenstein, "Coping With Terrorism: Norms and Internal Security in Germany and Japan," Paper Prepared for Delivery at the 1991 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, p. 14.

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Germany's emerging position as the European hegemon. Mainstream definitions of hegemony rely on two alternative formulations in explaining why weaker states defer to stronger ones. The first, liberal, view stresses self-interest. It assumes that hegemons are voluntarily accorded their status by the weak because both parties are only concerned with absolute gains. Proponents of this view suggest that smaller states often gain relatively more than the hegemon from such arrangements. A second, realist, view emphasizes the importance of coercion in explaining why a country is accorded hegemonic status. The weak submit to the strong because they must; the strong give them no choice in the matter. Again, however, as with the liberal approach, the absolute benefits derived from such arrangements are shared.[2]

Neither approach adequately captures the situation regarding Germany's developing hegemony in Europe. Germany benefits from the present framework while its major trading partners lose, yet Germany does not enforce this system through force as one would otherwise assume. So why do Germany's neighbors voluntarily submit to a hegemonic system in which they are systematic losers? To explain this anomaly it is necessary to deploy a third definition of hegemony, one developed by Antonio Gramsci, which, unlike its mainstream counterparts, stresses the role of ideas.

Gramsci's work is too well-known to warrant an exegesis of his main ideas. Here it is sufficient to reiterate that Gramsci distinguishes between *dominio* (domination), which he sees primarily tied to the "political society's" (i.e., the state's) mechanism to exert its power, and *egemonia* (hegemony) which he associates with the complex web of power and influence exerted by the most prevalent group(s) in "civil society."[3] Whereas domination is always associated with coercion, state, power, even force, for Gramsci hegemony remains consistently identified with equilibrium, persuasion, consolidation and consent.[4] His definition of

2. For a discussion of the benign and malign versions of hegemonic stability theory see Duncan Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *in International Organization* (Autumn 1985), pp. 579-614. The most comprehensive statement of the realist position is provided by Stephen Krasner, "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," in *World Politics* (April 1976), pp. 317-47.

3. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. by Q. Hoare and G. Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1971); and *Selections from Political Writings, 1921-1926*, ed. and trans. by Q. Hoare (New York: International Publishers, 1978).

4. Gwyn A. Williams, "The Concept of 'Egemonia' in the Thought of Antonio Gramsci: Some Notes on Interpretation," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, XXI (October-December, 1960), p. 591; and Joseph V. Femia, *Gramsci's Political Thought: Hegemony, Consciousness, and the Revolutionary Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), pp. 35-50.

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hegemony thus stresses the explanatory importance of ideas — that this voluntary submission by one party to another is predicated on the belief, right or wrong, that all parties (not just the strong) will benefit from the interaction between the weak and the strong although they might not recognize this act as submissive nor that the outcome will indeed be a hegemonic relationship.[5]

In the context of Germany's relationship with Europe, the voluntary submission of Germany's neighbors to Germany's predominance can be explained by this Gramscian formulation in two ways. First, for the countries of Western Europe but even more so for those of Eastern Europe Germany is the capitalist model to emulate — with its combination of free enterprise and social welfarism captured in the concept of the "social market economy." When these factors are coupled with institutionalized labor involvement and high levels of prosperity, the result is *Modell Deutschland*. Alternatives such as more centrally planned economies like the French or more *laissez-faire* ones like the American lack *Modell Deutschland*'s unique combination of high rates of prosperity and a large, impressive "safety net" achieved through the democratic representation of labor. The first "ideological" component of hegemony is therefore the desire to emulate the German model. With this comes an adherence to German principles about how to organize an economy as well as an accessibility to German advice and guidance in the formation of economic policy.[6]

The second ideological component is the belief that emulation of the German model also requires active trading with the Germans not only through the import and export of finished products but also through foreign direct investment and joint-ventures. This "positive-sum" assumption is reminiscent of the myth about Ireland's fabled Blarney Stone — that one can only benefit from its medicinal healing powers through direct contact. With perhaps the singular exception of the British (who, since Margaret Thatcher's departure as Prime Minister, appear also to have finally succumbed to the belief that greater integration with the Germans is desirable), no country has voiced substantial concern that it might be subsidizing German prosperity as a result of this integrative process while reaping little in the way of

5. For a discussion of cultural hegemony in international relations, see Bruce Russett, "The Mysterious Case of the Vanishing Hegemon: or, Is Mark Twain Really Dead?," in *International Organization*, Vol. 39, No. 2 (Spring 1985), pp. 228-30.

6. More broadly on this point, see Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen, "Schmitt's 'Testament' and the Future of Europe," in *Telos* 83, (Spring 1990), p. 10.

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rewards. British attitudes have been dismissed by other EC members and have traditionally resulted in Britain's political isolation.

The two ideological elements — emulation through replication and through interaction or integration — combine with the importance naturally being accorded in both West and East to Europe's biggest economy and the world's largest exporter to generate a rapidly developing hegemony. This development, however, is in no way the product of purposive behavior by the Germans (or their partners). It defies a deep-seated "Federal Republican" fear of expansion and an almost dogmatic commitment to constraining German influence. On the contrary, the "German Question" has reached a new phase in which traditional assumptions must be reappraised in order to understand emergent realities.

The Debate Concerning the "German Question"

The issue of Germany's role in a new Europe and a new world has already generated considerable debate in both Europe and the US. The majority view sees Germany's unification as a boon to European unification and global peace. The minority view worries that a strong Germany will repeat the mistakes of the past. While the former points to *Modell Deutschland*'s exemplary democracy and economy, the latter argues that these institutions have never been tested in a real crisis. The majority view is more accurate, although its effect on German power might be different. Rather than presuming that German democracy and economy will prevent a future hegemonic role for Germany in European and world affairs, such a role is guaranteed by precisely these factors — that Germany will take its place as a great power beside the US and Japan. Successful democracies are powerful because of the consensual nature of their politics and the efficiency of their markets. The adage that Deutschmarks might go further than Panzers in extending German power seems compelling. German hegemony will not be the result of power politics but of its recognized economic and political position in both Western and Eastern Europe. The result will be a dominance by mutual consent rather than by external force.

Arguments stressing the benign effects of German unification for European development reflect any one of three critical approaches to postwar history — the functional, the institutional and the sociological. The functional approach is prominent in the integration theory so favored by scholars studying the development of the EC.[7] The argument

7. The classic books in this genre include Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political,*

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focuses on the taming of German power and influence through German involvement in such organizations as the EC and NATO. This was the reasoning behind the initial American promotion of Franco-German cooperation in the early 1950s.[8] It has been characterized as a functional component of America's postwar "double containment" policy regarding Germany and the Soviet Union.[9] Implicit in this policy is also the assumption that the mutual benefits accruing to both sides will deter any imperialist ambitions. The hope is that the primary effect of Germany's involvement in the EC will be that its economic strength will allow it to become the locomotive for broader European development, and that its foreign investments will grow along with its foreign trade.[10]

The institutional approach supports a benign image of the effects of German unification and focuses on the postwar development of the domestic political system. Josef Joffe, one of the most vocal proponents of this approach, has developed arguments initially formulated by Peter Katzenstein.[11] Joffe emphasizes that the new, united German state has assimilated the system of government and the democratic values of the Federal Republic, and suggests that German foreign policy will foreswear dominance through either economic imperialism or military aggression.[12] Therefore, he would support Alexander Gerschenkron's conclusion that postwar German development has been and will be different because the Junker class which formed the social and economic basis of German imperialism that led to two world wars was destroyed.[13] Following this logic, the newly-united Germany can be divorced from earlier Germanies.[14] The success of the Federal Republic

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Social and Economic Forces, 1950-1957 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958); and Leon Lindberg and Stuart A. Scheingold, *Europe's Would-Be Polity: Patterns of Change in the European Community* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1970).

8. Robert Gilpin, *US Power and the Multinational Corporation* (New York: Basic Books, 1975), p. 107.

9. Wolfram Hanrieder, *Germany, America, Europe: Forty Years of German Foreign Policy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 5-7.

10. Chancellor Helmut Kohl has been a major advocate of this view. See Helmut Kohl, "The Voice of Harmony that Stills National Rivalry," Financial Times Survey, in *Financial Times* (29 October 1990), p. 11.

11. Peter J. Katzenstein, *Policy and Politics in West Germany: The Growth of a Semi-Sovereign State* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1987).

12. See, for example, Josef Joffe's article, "Reunification II: This Time, No Hobnail Boots," in *New York Times* (September, 1990).

13. See Alexander Gerschekron, *Bread and Democracy in Germany* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989).

14. For two exceptions, see Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York: Norton, 1979) and Simon Reich, *The Fruits of Fascism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990).

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as a liberal democracy governing a prosperous economy has, accordingly, once and for all exorcised the demons of the German *Sonderweg*.

The sociological approach is concerned primarily with the evolution of German elites. Its central premise rests on an evolutionary "knowledge through learning" process. Since German economic, intellectual and political elites are conscious of their responsibility for Germany's past, they presumably guard against the reemergence of anti-liberal, militaristic and xenophobic tendencies. In broad historical terms the new German elites represent the postwar triumph of the bourgeoisie and its values over those of agrarian and aristocratic elites. These bourgeois values stress both a cosmopolitan culture within a European context and that EC member states recognize their advantage in maintaining an environment of reconciliation and mutual trust.

The cosmopolitanization and bourgeoisification of the Federal Republic's captains of industry is one of the most fundamental differences from the Weimar Republic. In the latter the business class largely adhered to a hyper-nationalism, was profoundly authoritarian, detested democratic institutions and schemed to destroy labor's autonomy.[15] In contrast, Bonn's business elites have an international outlook, accept and support the Republic's democratic order, and have entered into intricate corporate arrangements with labor. While some businessmen, politicians and academics have, since unification, reportedly been refusing to conduct interviews in English, this German neo-parochialism seems destined to remain a small if growing phenomenon.[16] More significantly, their collective focus on trade was rewarded in 1988 when, for the first time, Germany became the world's largest exporter.

The minority view, which stresses the purposive behavior of German elites and the dangers of Germany's hegemony, takes either an historical or cultural approach. The former tends to decry the claims of conservative historians that German culpability in two world wars was limited. It also deplores the violent nature of the first German unification, the German bourgeoisie's pallid efforts to institute democracy, and the aggressive nature of German foreign policy — all of which acted as preconditions for National Socialism.[17] Proponents of this view

15. Franz Neumann, *Behemoth* (New York: Octagon, 1963).

16. Interview by Brian Lamb with Frederick Kempe, on C-SPAN, (Dec. 21, 1990).

17. The originator of this approach was Eckhart Kehr, whose contribution is analyzed by Richard J. Evans in "Introduction: Wilhelm II's Germany and the Historians," in Richard J. Evans, ed., *Society and Politics in Wilhelmine Germany* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978), p. 13. Other (some more) notable proponents of such radical interpretations include Fritz Fischer, *Germany's Aims in the First World War* (New York:

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point to recent attempts of conservative historians to "relativize" Germany's crimes — in the *Historikerstreit* — as evidence of at least an intellectual accommodation to German aggressiveness if not an outright defense of German militarism. They express concern that after Germany's unification it might seek aggressively to fill the power vacuum created by both Soviet and American withdrawals from Europe.[18]

The cultural approach is much more self-consciously voluntaristic and tends to reflect an *Angst* — both inside and outside Germany — about the country's enhanced power and its new problems which follow in the wake of national unification and global transformation. Such concerns have been expressed by German intellectuals, most notably Günther Grass, while foreigners have tended to dwell on the slightest sign of any recurrence of German nationalist symbols; any references to the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic or the joys of Wagner, the German *Volk* or the *Vaterland*.[19] This skeptical and watchful attitude is perhaps best reflected in Hermann Kantorowicz's comment in 1931 that "the new Germany's true foe is the old Germany."[20]

All these approaches focus on purposive German behavior in explaining the Germans' economic or territorial expansion or its absence. They all differ from the following formulation which emphasizes the non-purposive reasons for German expansion through its centrality and the activities of its neighbors.

Norton, 1967) and *The War of Illusions* (New York: Norton, 1975); John A. Moses, *The Politics of Illusion: The Fischer Controversy in German Historiography* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975); and Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *The German Empire 1871-1918* (Dover, NH: Berg Publishers, 1985).

18. For a summary of this debate, see Charles Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and the German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), pp. 1-2. For a discussion of this conservative intellectual tradition and the debates it engendered, see Reich, *The Fruits of Fascism*, *op. cit.*, pp. 6-19. As an example of German economic imperialism designed to address its raw materials policy, see Albert Hirschman, *National Power and the Structure of Foreign Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1945) on Nazi German treatment of the Balkan states in the 1930s; as applied to labor, see Edward Homze, *Foreign Labor in Nazi Germany* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967); and for a more general argument suggesting that German militarism was a product of a disjointed social structure, see Alexander Gerschenkron, *Bread and Democracy in Germany*, *op. cit.*

19. This issue is discussed by Richard Gott in an article entitled "State of Anxiety," in *Manchester Guardian Weekly* (October 7, 1990).

20. Hermann Kantorowicz, *The Spirit of British Policy and the Myth of the Encirclement of Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1931).

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German Hegemony in Western Europe

In order to assess German influence in Western Europe both now and in the future, two questions have to be answered: first, how much does Germany gain or lose in tying its import and export base to the EC? Second, has the EC budget offset any gross disparities in the trade balance? By examining economic data from the EC since 1972, just prior to when Great Britain became a member, it is possible to ascertain the degree to which Germany has contributed to the cost of maintaining the system and of the relative and absolute benefits to Germany. If Germany does dominate Western Europe economically, then this should be reflected in the pattern of trade flows.

It is common knowledge that the German economy thrives on its foreign exports. The data indicate that German exports to both European and global markets far outstripped those of its major European rivals — Italy, France and Great Britain — in the 1970s and 1980s.[21] As a percentage of GNP, German exports grew from one-fifth to one-third of its economy while the Italian and French percentage started from a smaller base and grew at a slower rate, both approximately half the rate of German expansion. Great Britain began from a smaller absolute base (albeit with a higher percentage of its base), and its exports also grew at a significantly slower rate. Although these developments by themselves are not sufficient for German hegemony, the overall pattern is consistent with that claim.

Furthermore, as the benign, liberal view of hegemonic democracies predicts, the growth of Germany's European and global penetration has been accompanied by the growth of smaller EC member states, most notably the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Ireland and Greece.[22] Yet, when discussing potential or actual German domination of regional markets, it is necessary to address the question of how much of Germany's export base has taken the form of increased market penetration of other EC member states: What percentage of the EC's exports originated in Germany during this period? How did Germany fare relative to its major economic competitors? Whereas Italian and French exports

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21. Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), p. 76. For example, Germany expanded its percentage of exports from 20.9% to 32.4% between 1972 and 1985; France went from 16.7% to 23.9% and Italy from 17.7% to 22.8%. So the French and Italian rate of expansion was about half the German rate. Britain expanded from 21.8% to 29.1%, so it grew approximately two-thirds of Germany's rate. All figures come from OECD *National Accounts: Main Aggregates, Volume 1, 1960-88* (Paris: O.E.C.D., 1990).

22. Snidal, "The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory," *op. cit.*

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to the EC stagnated or fell slightly despite the expansion of EC membership, the percentage of German exports as a percentage of the total grew by more than 15%.[23] Furthermore, Germany's global exports grew at almost twice the rate of the Italian and the French.

Whether juxtaposed to established or new rivals, the Germans outsold them all whether in regional or global terms, or in relative or absolute ones, at the start of the 1970s and at the end of the 1980s. As new countries joined the EC they found themselves importing more German goods as Germany consistently expanded its regional export base. By the mid-1980s Germany's export dominance was indisputable.[24] Whether Germany's control of more than a quarter of all EC market shares is an indication of regional hegemony is an open question. But the figures are comparable to those used by mainstream theorists as evidence of American global influence at the height of the US' hegemonic power.[25]

Some of the other major EC members have demonstrated continued resistance to the idea of more liberalized free trade arrangements with the Japanese and the Americans. But Germany's European partners should be more concerned with the internal threat posed by German exports. Apart from a unilateral decision by German producers to divert exports to alternative markets such as Eastern Europe, the only threat to Germany's regional trade balance comes precisely from the potentially expanded investments of Japanese and American firms in Europe.[26] The question remains then why Germany's trading partners in the EC, with the exception of the Dutch and the Irish, willingly

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23. German exports to EC markets as a percentage of all its exports expanded from 39.9% in 1972 to 47.4% in 1985 while France went from 48.8% to 47.6% and Italy from 45.0% and 46.0%. Britain's figures are 22.5 and 46.1%. Cf. *IMF Direction of Trade Statistics: Yearbook. 1990* (Washington, DC: I.M.F., 1990), and the *Yearbook* for 1979.

24. Cf. David Cameron, "The 1992 Initiative: Causes and Consequences," in Alberta Sbragia, ed., *Euro-Politics: Politics and Policymaking in the "New" European Community* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, forthcoming).

25. For example, Keohane's suggestion that hegemony must "hold comparative advantages in goods with high value added" (consistent with Gilpin, fn. 40) points to the significance of a strong export base. For a discussion, see Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), pp. 33-34. And he presents Table 3.1, p. 36, which lists proportions of world trade for the US and Britain, and then presents further data on p. 197 which lists US % of total world exports at 18% in 1950, 16% in 1960 and 11% in 1976. We assume the 1950 figure represents the percentage peak. Note further, however, that Gilpin claims that the US was responsible for 30% of the world's manufacturing exports in the early postwar period. See Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations*, *op. cit.*, p. 344.

26. Nissan, for example, is projected to become the largest car exporter from Britain in the early 1990s. See "Motor Industry Survey," in *The Economist* (Oct. 15, 1988), p. 10.

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adhere to these arrangements which so adversely affect their trade balance? There are two possible answers. One emphasizes the preeminence of interests and seeks an alternative financial basis for EC membership; the other stresses ideological consensus in explaining the continuity of trade relations.

Mainstream analysts characterize a hegemonic country as one willing and able to pay the costs of maintaining a system even when others violate the rules (e.g., not retaliating when others pursue protectionist economic policies in the context of a mutilateral free trade system) because the benefits outweigh the liabilities. An examination of the annual budget contributions, both direct and indirect, to the EC program allow us to measure the extent to which Germany underwrites the rules of the system. While not definitive, Brian Ardy's analysis of the EC budget in the mid-1980s substantiates three claims.[27] The first is that the Germans then already contributed so much of the budget that they clearly did underwrite the rules. Not only did they contribute more than any other member-state, but their receipts from it were lower than those of their major export rivals. The smaller countries in this system were the primary direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The second point concerns the indirect effects of EC programs, which partially mitigated the Italians' and the French's large trade deficits — both net losers under the EC system in the mid-1980s. Despite the loss, France's still sizable agricultural population, with its considerable electoral clout, has been the prime beneficiary of the system of subsidies.[28] France continues to oppose any changes in that system for this reason.[29] The fact that the Germans have so readily supported the French on this issue not only in the EC but in GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) illustrates German willingness to subsidize the system.

The third point has to do with the British claim that Great Britain did not benefit from EC membership — a realistic claim in view of British net contributions to the EC budget and the British trade deficit.

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27. See Brian Ardy "The National Incidence of the European Community Budget," in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 4, pp. 408, 410, 413 and 415.

28. Thus the French government's EC policy is a suboptimal outcome for extremely rational political reasons. One innovative approach suitable for explaining the dynamics of this process is the "two-level game" approach developed by Robert D. Pumam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," in *International Organization*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (Summer 1988), pp. 427-60.

29. For a substantiation of this claim, see John Zysman, "The French State in the International Economy," in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *Between Power and Plenty* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 273.

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While European officials consistently frowned upon Thatcher's manner and her insistence that Britain's budgetary contribution be renegotiated, the figures suggest that her demands were quite legitimate. The British contribution to the EC budget was second only to that of Germany. But while Germany was the primary beneficiary of trade arrangements, Great Britain was by far the biggest loser. Unlike France and Italy, there were no mitigating factors for Britain. Yet one of the fundamental reasons for Thatcher's loss of leadership was her vocal opposition to EC membership. Recognizing the acute nature of "the British problem," which originated in the early 1980s and dominated the agenda of the Fontainebleu Summit in 1984, German Chancellor Kohl convened an extraordinary session of the European Council in Brussels in February 1988. He thereby took the initiative in reducing Britain's budgetary commitment. Although the full effects of the drastic budgetary changes taken at that time are as yet unclear, Britain is in a better position and the Germans may well end up paying a greater share of the budget.[30]

Being the principal beneficiaries of the present EC system of trade, the Germans have partially offset their tremendous gains through extensive budgetary contributions. But the German dominance of the market continued to grow in the latter half of the 1980s. This tendency will no doubt continue given strategic trading blocs which limit competition to German exports. In both absolute and relative terms, the present EC system enhances Germany's wealth and power in relation to its major trading partners.

The political relation between Germany and its West European trading partners reflects a sophisticated German understanding of the need to control the agenda of potential issues and to set the intellectual framework in which decisions are made rather than take strident positions on those issues that have already emerged. Unlike the French, the Germans had no vision of or desire for political leadership in the formation of the EC and have not as yet sought any such position commensurate with their economic power. Yet in many important respects German thinking has come to dominate that of EC member states. While French attempts to assert political leadership have lacked subtlety, have often proved to be no more than symbolic, and have floundered largely on the pragmatic considerations of France's trading partners,

30. On the nature of reforms and their possible implications, see Michael Shackleton, *Financing the European Community* (London: Royal Institute of International Affairs, Francis Pinter, 1990). For a brief discussion of the "British problem," see pp. 3ff.

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Germany's ideological leadership has grown almost as a matter of course. The ideological values propagated by the Germans emphasize the stabilization of democratic values and the institution of a social market economy that, they claim, account for Germany's economic success over time. The belief that these factors explain its success has enhanced Germany's influence because it has become *Modell Deutschland* for Europe. Given the choice between French centralization and German decentralization, the latter model of political and economic organization has won over the minds, if not the hearts, of Europeans. What is essential here is the claim that consensual belief in a democratic and benign Germany has complemented German economic interests by ensuring that German economic penetration has not been seen as part of the imperialist policy of an authoritarian state. At the same time, however, the Germans are not the political leaders of Europe nor the continent's spokesmen in any representative sense. They have not as yet assumed this role. But they have successfully buttressed their economic domination with the originally Anglo-Saxon values of democracy and free trade which they initially assimilated as a result of the reformist efforts of the postwar occupation. Now the Germans seek to act as the reliable guardians of these values and of their successful acceptance in the rest of Europe.[31]

While the tangible benefits of democracy are often not measurable, and thus countries can be forgiven for simply assuming that democracy is beneficial, the benefits of free trade are observable and quantifiable. With ready alternatives (such as the French protectionist model) available, it is possible to establish whether or not free trade generates the greatest prosperity for the greatest number. Precisely because the effects of the system of free trade have proven deleterious to most of the EC member states — Germany being the outstanding exception — this apparent anomaly requires explanation. Why is it that liberal economic assumptions about the positive effects of free trade on European integration remain unquestioned? Indeed, one set of observers even argue that "Apologists for free trade believe that the Community owes its prosperity to being a free trade area; but a study of the pattern

31. The ideological consensus of this view of contemporary Germany as democratic can be measured by the remarkable lack of European discussion about occasional anti-democratic policies such as the *Berufsverbot* which banned communists from state employment as civil servants. See Gerard Braunthal, *Political Loyalty and Public Service in West Germany: The 1975 Decree Against Radicals and Its Consequences* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990).

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of trade reveals that the Community under free trade is a German 'co-prosperity' sphere in which prosperity is divided unequally."[32] Unlike the successful assimilation of democratic values in Western Europe, largely as the result of postwar Allied policies, it is the Germans who have worked hard to extend the principles of free trade both in Germany and in Europe. Although the Americans favored free trade, this complemented the preferences of the Federal Republic's political elites.[33] It was Ludwig Erhard who, first as Economics Minister and then as Chancellor, implemented the most important initial policies which resulted in the development of a German economy based on free trade principles. These policies emphasized currency reform and export-led growth. They have been commonly associated with Germany's "economic miracle" dating from the late 1940s to the early 1960s. German leaders of the Left and Right (barring fringes on either end of the political spectrum) have portrayed themselves as adherents of Erhard's unique mix of free trade and social welfare that was termed the "social market economy."

These free trade principles were integrated into the EC's structure at the insistence of the Germans and their American sponsors. The direct affiliates of American multinational firms in the EC were thus allowed to export freely to other member states. Many EC members looked to Germany's combination of export-led growth and prudent fiscal conservatism. It was thus that *Modell Deutschland* took shape in the minds of Germany's new trading partners. They thought that by taking the German road they could emulate the effects. Indicative of the allure of *Modell Deutschland* and of Germany hegemony in Europe is that those countries recently liberated from the Soviet Empire in the East are now looking to follow this same road. The remark of a Polish social scientist has best captured the reality of this situation: "When Poles, Czechs, Rumanians and Hungarians think of the free market they think of the Federal Republic with all its wealth and comfort. Nobody wants to dwell on the necessary and difficult tasks to reach that stage of development."[34] Of course, this belief on the part of both West and East European states ignores the possibility that Germany's benefits might have

32. Tony Cutler *et al.*, *1992 — The Struggle for Europe: A Critical Evaluation of the European Community* (New York: Berg, 1989), p. 26.

33. Michael Kreile, "West Germany: The Dynamics of Expansion," in Peter Katzenstein, ed., *Between Power and Plenty: Foreign Economic Policies of Advanced Industrial States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), p. 196.

34. Grzegorz Ekiert in a personal remark to the authors.

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been achieved at their expense. If Germany's prosperity has in fact been built on an economic domination of member states in the EC, then its imitators can never match it.[35]

Carl Lankowski's analysis of German trade and monetary policies in the 1970s supports the claim that Germany's prime concern has been the extension of free trade principles in the EC. He describes what he calls a "West German policy of accumulation" which was "inextricably bound up with the regional extension of the West German state."[36] He points to two examples of this policy. The first concerns discussions in the mid-1970s about the Economic Monetary Union. According to Lankowski, potential reforms being discussed at that time threatened to cause the appreciation of the Deutschmark and thus adversely affect the export position of West German industry. The German courtship of the French resulted in a reassessment of the reform program and a realignment of economic policies around West German priorities.[37] Recent agreements that institutionalize the Bundesbank as both the model and the authority for the proposed European Monetary Union (EMU) echo these earlier discussions.

The second example concerns German involvement in European schemes with respect to the Third World. Lankowski focuses on how the Germans thwarted the popular Corea plan, whose organizing principle was to raise the price of basic agriculture and mining products in order to increase the revenue of Third World states. The implementation of such a plan would have had severe repercussions for the West German economy, which is heavily reliant on cheap raw materials so that it can export competitively-priced finished products. The Germans stressed the threat to the principles of free trade involved in such an agreement and constructed an alternative framework in the form of the Lomé Convention.[38] A third possible example from the 1970s concerns

35. Culter *et al.*, *1992*, *op cit.*, p. 5.

36. Carl Lankowski, "Modell Deutschland and the International Regionalization of the West German State in the 1970s," in Andrei Markovits, ed., *The Political Economy of West Germany: Modell Deutschland* (New York: Praeger, 1982), p. 93.

37. *Ibid.*, pp. 94, 96.

38. Instead of threatening German competitiveness as the Corea Plan had done, the terms of the Lomé Convention benefitted the Germans in important ways. First, it stressed the importance of the total revenues of Third World states rather than price increases, thus enhancing the potential for growing supplies of resources. Second, it encouraged the dismantling of British and French privileges in their former colonies which were labeled protectionist. Not only did this open up previously closed British and French markets to Germany, it also encouraged free trade because now British and French goods had to compete in a Europe with no protected markets. See *ibid.*, pp. 104-06.

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the encouragement of *Ostpolitik* as not only a German but a European policy. The German justification for that policy was based on enhanced national security. But this policy encouraged other West European states to foresee the eventual implementation of a European free trade zone.

German Hegemony in Eastern Europe

Unlike the situation of Germany in Western Europe, there are no institutional restraints on German behavior in the East comparable to the EC. Here, however, it is sufficient to focus on the data concerning Germany's relations with member and associate states in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA). The evidence of Germany's competitive edge in Eastern Europe *vis-à-vis* other Western states is overwhelming. In due course it will become even more formidable for the newly-united German state by virtue of the fact that it has inherited the close "socialist" ties of the former East Germany with Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. West German sales to Eastern Europe exceeded the combined total of the next four Western countries; West German firms captured over 35% of the East European market. The figures with respect to the Soviet Union are only slightly less formidable. The Federal Republic's export sales were almost 50% greater than those of the next largest exporter, the US.[39]

Germany's impressive economic dominance of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union also extends to joint ventures. Of more than one thousand joint ventures registered in Poland during the first quarter of 1990, more than 40% involve West German firms.[40] A similar trend obtains in Czechoslovakia. Here the German presence reaches well beyond the glamorous firms and prestigious multinationals and involves many small companies often with less than one million dollars in capital. The most visible example of German presence in Czechoslovakia is Volkswagen's purchase of Skoda, the county's premium car maker and largest industrial producer. By paying Skoda more than double the amount offered by Franco-Swedish investors, Volkswagen, already Europe's largest carmaker, is now strategically poised to expand its lead in what will be, geographically, Europe's most important growth area in the 1990s.[41]

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39. *Business Eastern Europe* (September 3, 1990), p. 291. German 1989 exports to the USSR totalled $6,522 million compared to $4,584 million for the US, $3,501 million for Finland, and $3,421 million for Japan. See *Business Eastern Europe* (April 23, 1990), p. 139.

40. *Business Eastern Europe* (June 4, 1990), p. 188; *Ibid.*, (April 10, 1990), pp. 116, 117. (June, 25, 1990), p. 212.

41. "Volkswagen and Skoda: The people's car heads east," in *The Economist* (December 15, 1990).

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Both in terms of trade figures and joint ventures, the Federal Republic is the unchallenged leader not only in the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia, but in all of Eastern Europe. The two pillars of postwar German influence in this area have been *Ostpolitik* (the intellectual and structural precursor of détente) and its economic counterpart, *Osthandel*. Together these policies gave the Germans a comparative advantage in Eastern Europe in the post-Cold War era relative to their European or American competitors. *Modell Deutschland*, with its emphasis on a strong Social Democratic Party, ancillary independent labor movement and the social market economy that generates stable growth and high levels of prosperity, provides the most cherished option for the countries in this area. With most aspects of the postwar German order being highly respected in Eastern Europe, it should come as no surprise that some countries now liberated from the Soviet yoke are actively seeking to emulate West German institutions in the establishment of their new policies. This ranges from the adoption of the West German electoral system in Hungary to the more than fleeting interest on the part of Czechoslovakia in the Constitution of the Federal Republic.

Aside from economic organization and constitutional structure, culture and language are among the most decisive transmitters of hegemonic rule. At least until 1945 German culture and language provided a common bond and a *lingua franca* for the political class and the cultural elite in Eastern Europe. Paralleling the westernization and commercialization of the Federal Republic, the emergence of German culture and language in post-1989 East-Central Europe is more an indication of this region's attempt to become European or Western rather than the triumph of German *Bildung*. Germany's cultural hegemony in this area will no doubt have a commercial and capitalist character. East Europeans are now learning German not to read Goethe and Schiller but to converse with representatives of Siemens and Volkswagen. Of the sixteen million people currently studying German in educational institutions of all levels, twelve million are in East Central Europe and the Soviet Union.[42]

Conclusion

A new stage of the "German question" has emerged whose formulation defies previous assumptions. The old question asked whether Germany's military, political and economic elites purposively sought

42. German Foreign Ministry, "Förderung der deutschen Sprache in Mittel-Südost- und Osteuropa." Unpublished Report, 1990.

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to expand their economic or territorial power base. Various contemporary responses focus on Germany's role in Europe through this traditional lens. But these approaches fail to recognize changed circumstances and that it is impossible to answer this question simply in terms of optimism or pessimism about the German leadership's motives. Rather than being plagued by the traditional characterizations of Germany's *Sonderweg* and *Zwischenkultur*, authoritarianism and national chauvinism, the "German question" today should be approached differently because it is one which belongs to the peaceful interaction of liberal democracies. None of Germany's neighbors and neither of the old superpowers worry any more about Germany's control of Europe through force of arms.

Germans also share this benign view of themselves. They are not intent on military domination. Allied attempts to reeducate the Germans so as to imbue them with a propensity to pacifism has proved to be singularly successful. The ironic confirmation of this success was recently demonstrated in German resistance to the idea of committing any military forces to the Gulf War or to the Yugoslavian Civil War.[43] The less positive side of this resistance stems from a comfortable complacency bordering on haughty cynicism and an obnoxious holier-than-thou attitude. Given its position in Europe as the unquestioned leader, Germany was not about to jeopardize its stability by becoming involved in dubious adventures in either the Middle East or in Europe.

The Germans' achievements in Western Europe in the 1970s and the 1980s appear likely to be repeated in Eastern Europe in an even more comprehensive and swifter manner in the 1990s. This economic and political hegemony in the East will reinforce Germany's position in the West. The question remains as to why Germany's EC partners in Western Europe have allowed this to happen and why countries in Eastern Europe are inviting this same situation from a country that has historically been considered so hostile to their interests? How is it that both Eastern and Western Europeans have been able to overcome their greatest fear and to embroil themselves in a web of relations which threaten to impose a German hegemony? Paradoxes abound. West Europeans see the German economy as the locomotive for their own growth and believe that EC institutions will constrain German development

43. The further irony is that it is the Allies who have so strongly encouraged the Germans to engage in foreign militarism, seemingly unconcerned about the potential implications of such a precedent for European security. This short-term Allied agenda therefore carries within it at least the potential seed of future German militarism and, with it, friction between Germany and its neighbors.

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and power. East Europeans believe that close contact with Germany will allow them to replicate Germany's historic transition to liberal democracy and prosperous capitalism. In both cases, the paradox is explained by the fact that the respect accorded to Germans, when coupled with willingness to interact with them on a political, cultural and economic basis, provides Germans with tremendous influence. The borderline between influence and hegemony is (at least potentially) crossed when the German's authority and credibility, which they have by virtue of *Modell Deutschland* is concretely considered in relation to the size and scope of their economy relative to the rest of Europe. The expressed hope of many German liberals and Leftists that the Federal Republic will remain merely a larger Switzerland or something akin to Austria bespeaks either an incredible naiveté or a cynicism bordering on the irresponsible.

In the debate between optimists and pessimists concerning Germany's influence in Europe it must be said that both the hopes of the former and the fears of the latter, however understandable, are misplaced. Germany will not drag Europe's economies along with it as a locomotive for growth as the optimists contend. German power will expand, but it will do so inadvertently rather than willfully, economically rather than militarily. National aggrandizement is not on the German agenda. But it will be a necessary by-product of Germany's hegemonic position in Europe. The present tendency toward an increasing regionalization of the world's economy will only serve to accelerate and intensify Germany's hegemony. Thus, even though today's Germany might very well be "peaceable, fearful, green," and "favoring a low profile in world affairs," the objective fact is that Germany is in the process of becoming a hegemonic power in Europe.[44] This hegemony will be evident in the export of both goods and ideas.[45] It is the export of ideas that will ultimately provide Germany's cosmopolitan society with the capacity to flourish in the new Europe.

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44. See "Today's Germans: peaceable, fearful — and Green" in *Financial Times* (January 4, 1991); and "Germans favor a low profile in world affairs," in *Financial Times* (January 4, 1991).

45. As for the export of ideas, the foundations of major German political parties have opened offices all over Eastern Europe and state agencies have increased their presence in Eastern Europe since 1989. Cultural funding of things German have grown rapidly. Said one pundit, "Buying hegemony sure ain't cheap. But if you don't have the Beatles and Beethoven is dead, how else can you spend your coveted Deutschmarks if you want to achieve a cultural hegemony?"

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German Unification, Nationalism and Democracy

Horst Mewes

Despite the undeniable success of constitutional democracy in the Federal Republic, the unexpected German reunification in 1990 has raised fears of a new aggressive German nationalism. For many observers a larger Germany without the restraints imposed on the Bonn government by national division and a solid anchor in the Western alliance, is synonymous with greater German political ambition. It is feared that unification will encourage an independent Germany to reassume its traditional position of "Middle-European" power, less interested in the future political unity of the European Community, preoccupied with its own unique but chronically insecure identity, wavering between East and West.

Significantly, both German potential reunification and German aspirations to become an equal member of a unified Europe are identified as fundamental goals in the Preamble to the 1949 Constitution. Furthermore, Germany is unique among its European partners in that Article 24 permits "limitation of sovereignty" for the sake of "a peaceful and permanent order in Europe." For decades, however, political opinions have differed on whether these goals were mutually exclusive or politically compatible. Until the East German uprisings in 1989 the basic dynamics of the Cold War, as well as the economic pressures towards a European Common Market, had favored those politicians who argued that, everything else being equal, European unity would ultimately enhance the chances for German association or reunification. Until 1989 East Germans were not only constitutionally citizens of the Federal Republic but Berlin, by virtue of its economic treaties with Bonn, was in fact an associate member of the Common Market.

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Following the intrinsic logic of these facts, since 1990 the conservative government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl has followed the dual strategy of rapid German reunification and eventual European political union. It was a conscious strategy to assuage fears of a future Germany pursuing its national identity and power in isolation from its European neighbors. United Germany, at least in the short-run burdened by the unexpectedly high costs of economic integration, signalled its unchanged basic intention of developing its national future in the context of a united Europe.

Since official reunification in October 1990, the lack of nationalist fervor among Germans, the government's renewed pledges not only to European political unification but also the Western military alliance and, most of all, the preoccupation with the overwhelming practical task of integrating East and West have assuaged fears of potential German national excess. This has not, however, ended the political controversy about relations between nationalism and democracy in the new Germany. The importance of the problem is attested to by the fact that the debate began long before unification. A renewed interest in a German "national identity" and ensuing criticisms that this interest might prove detrimental to German identification with universal (or "Western") standards of democracy had been voiced since at least the early 1960s.[1] They were raised with even greater insistance under the Kohl government during the 1980s. Nationalism vs. democracy was the main issue in the *Historikerstreit* in 1986.[2]

Is this a continuation of the search for national identity? Beyond normal patriotic pride in economic, political and cultural accomplishments, interest in a "German national identity" was rekindled for a variety of reasons. First and foremost, discussion about the meaning of nation, state and democracy was necessitated by the German division, the constitutional mandate to maintain national unity, and radically different political developments in East and West. Furthermore, Germany's attempt to come to grips with the past *(Vergangenheitsbewältigung)* publicized the tenuous connections between post-war German democracy and various traditional notions of state and nation. Since the

1. Cf. Werner Weidenfeld ed., *Die Identität der Deutschen* (Bonn: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 1983), esp. chap. 1.

2. Cf. *Historikerstreit* (Munich: Piper Verlag, 1987). Also, cf. Charles S. Maier, *The Unmasterable Past: History, Holocaust, and German National Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988). For many of the key documents, see the "Special Issue on the *Historikerstreit*" of *New German Critique*, No. 44 (Spring-Summer 1988).

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West German constitution mandated eventual unification in "free self-determination," the question arose as to the priority of freedom and democracy in the West over unification with a non-democratic East. Were freedom and democracy more important than unification, or should the latter take place even at the possible expense of the former? In 1963 Karl Jaspers first formulated the notion that the Federal Republic was a *Staatsnation*, i.e., a nation living together under the aegis of the Western state. Germany, he argued, had lost its right for national reunification as a result of the crimes of National Socialism.[3] Kurt Sontheimer had argued that democracy in West Germany should "distance" itself from the problematic values of national "wholeness," "community" and "people." What mattered for the new Germany was making the free constitution and German lifestyle the foundation of national unity.[4] The line was drawn between nationalists harking back to German tradition and democrats seeing their identity in Dolf Sternberger's *Verfassungspatriotismus*.[5]

There were additional reasons for the renewed interest in German nationalism. For one, the astounding post-WWII *Wirtschaftswunder* proved inadequate for German pride and sense of self. It has been pointed out that German notions of national identity have "moved from cultural, to political, to economic, and then back to a series of cultural claims."[6] Changes in the cycle were caused largely by "generational revolts against previous generations' assumption about nationality." If this is correct, the Left's rejection in the 1960s of the 1950s economic, cultural or political nationalism should not come as a surprise.

West German conservatives coming to power during the 1980s needed to counter the democratization and growing pluralism of the 1970s, as well as Jaspers', Sontheimer's and other arguments. Democratic politics increasingly showed that any substantive notions of democracy beyond agreement on constitutional procedural rules could not generate a solid national consensus. On the contrary: democratic politics was ultimately a conflict over radically different versions of its meaning. West German domestic controversies were exacerbated by East Germany's efforts to establish its own "socialist nation" and

3. Cf. Roland Hahn,"Die Idee der Nation und die Lösung der deutschen Frage," in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, B 29/90, (July 13, 1990), p. 9.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

5. Although Habermas has recently popularized *Verfassungspatriotismus* (patriotism of the constitution), it was Dolf Sternberger who first coined the term.

6. Harold James, *A German Identity 1770-1990* (New York: Rout ledge, 1989), p. 217.

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"socialist national culture," undermining West-German hopes for future German unity based on a collective national culture (*gesamtdeutschen Kulturnation*).[7] East Germany sought to become a nation "whose characteristics are socialist and whose origin is German." This meant that the East had to assimilate all German history from the "vantage point" of socialism.[8] Thus both East and West Germany literally had to fight over their respective claims to a common historical heritage.[9]

In the current German debate about the relations between nation and commitment to democratic republicanism three main positions have emerged. One, associated with Michael Stürmer, stresses the political importance of basing a renewed German identity on a clear sense of national selfhood. Such an identity is to be gleaned from a regained sense of German history. It is no accident that this position is most frequently advocated by historians. Stürmer assumes it is the task of the historian to engage in the creation of meaning for the nation.[10] What this meaning would be, however, is left unanswered. Apparently, he is demanding more than that the politics of the German government be guided by the increased "responsibilities" of economic power, geographic influence, and other accoutrements of national might.

Opponents of this endeavor to extract an identity out of Germany's tumultuous history are led by Habermas.[11] They counter the dangers of renewed nationalism with an appeal to political identity based on *Verfassungspatriotismus*. Germans are to derive their identity exclusively from being citizens of a democracy based on Western rather than merely German principles. Such universal democratic principles are separable from any one national history and thus transcend nationalism. For contemporary Germans this transcendence is essential to their self-image, since no one identity as a democratic nation emerges from their ambiguous tradition. Germany's attitude towards its own history can, for obvious reasons, never be anything but critical. If there is any precedent at all for this particular disposition, one would

7. Cf. Hahn, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

8. *Ibid.* p. 10.

9. The extent to which renewed West German interest in nationalism was a response to East German challenges has not received sufficient attention. Cf. Wilfried von Bredow, "Geschichte als Element der deutschen Identität?" in Weidenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 102 ff.

10. Cf. Michael Stürmer, "Kein Eigentum der Deutschen: die deutsche Frage," in Weidenfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 83-102. Also see Michael Stürmer's essays in *Historikerstreit*, *op. cit.*

11. Cf. Jürgen Habermas, "Nochmals: Zur Identität der Deutschen," in *Die nachholende Revolution* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990); Jürgen Habermas, *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1987), esp. chapters 6 and 7; Jürgen Habermas, "Der DM-nationalismus," in *Die Zeit*, No. 14 (April 6, 1990), overseas edition.

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need to return to the peculiar German enlightenment advocacy of a world citizenry.

People such as Dieter Henrich and Rüdiger Bubner have attempted to combine nationalism and republican democracy in the new united Germany.[12] Claiming that universal democratic principles can be realized only in the contexts of various uniquely national histories, Henrich and Bubner deny the alleged necessary antagonism between democracy and nation. This position attempts to establish parallels between national culture and democracy said to have been indigenous to other Western countries. Thus this "compromise" position does not assume that Germany gain its sense of identity from a higher "inner meaning" of its history. Rather, Henrich wants Germany to ground its newly gained republicanism on those cultural forces within its history favoring and underpinning democracy. Nationalism is clearly subordinated to republicanism: he maintains that such a disposition is compatible with basing one's collective identity on a distinctly German mentality and cultivation of everyday life.

Although both Henrich and Bubner stand in opposition to Habermas, their arguments are closer than it appears. Habermas does not deny the necessity of a collective life called nation. But he insists, along with Henrich and Bubner, that its culture be guided by the priorities of republicanism. Habermas and Henrich differ profoundly, however, when it comes to the feasibility of identifying in German history continuous traditions which could provide Germans with an historical identity supportive of republicanism. For this reason, where Henrich unabashedly speaks of German national identity, Habermas prefers to speak of unique patterns of national life in the general category of living practices. Henrich and Bubner as well as Habermas agree in rejecting Stürmer's appeal to a transcendent historical meaning as the penultimate source of German self-consciousness and pride. Habermas thus differs from Henrich and Bubner mainly in questioning the wisdom of looking for a national identity, and in doubting that historically a German "mentality" can sustain republican democracy.

German Nationalism and History

Renewed interest in German national identity, although particularly pronounced during the Kohl years and enhanced by unification, actually

12. Dieter Henrich, *Eine Republik Deutschland* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1990); Rüdiger Bubner, "Philosophen und die deutsche Einheit," in *Merkur*, Vol. 44 (Oct.-Nov. 1990), pp. 1018 ff.

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goes back to the 1960s. But it is based on a problem formulated by Dolf Sternberger way back in 1949: "We do not know who we are. That is the German question. There is hardly anything, no goal, no form of communal life, which we can accept and realize wholeheartedly. There lies a shadow on all possible modes of German existence"[13] Presumably, the German turn to Western-style democracy and human rights, guaranteed by the 1949 constitution, in conjunction with the phenomenal economic revival of the post-war era should have sufficed to provide Germans with a new sense of identity within the Western "family of nations." Apparently, being part of the West (under the aegis of the US and in a new friendship with France) did not provide some Germans with a sufficiently strong identity *qua Germans*. Having attained economic prosperity, Germans wanted to enjoy "the normal relation to fatherland and nation" supposedly enjoyed by the classic Western democracies.[14] In addition, the radicalization of democratic standards by the 1960s student movement (and the SPD's call for more democracy), along with calls for German neutralism, showed the unreliability of *democracy* as a consensus-forming foundation for German *unity*. In light of the 1960s radical-democratic challenges, the political Right searched for notions of identity other than general concepts of institutional democracy and human rights. Finally, the division of Germany exacerbated by East German efforts to create its own national identity as a socialist nation laying claim to the "positive" aspects of German history and culture intensified awareness of the need for a uniquely German identity. German history, rather than Western standards weakened by the decline of Western notions of progress, was increasingly advocated as the source of identity. But was German history able to sustain national pride?

Desire for "normalcy," i.e., a self-understanding based on "pride" in one's historical accomplishments, was coupled to Germany's new power. This was emphasized by parts of the conservative press in their demands that Germany relinquish its role as a culprit, that it derive a new sense of national power from a consciousness of its growing influence, that it base itself on shared values and a common faith, that it regain a positive attitude towards the state based on an appreciation

13. Cited in Arnulf Baring, *Unser neuer Grossenwahn* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags Anstalt, 1988), p.33.

14. Kurt Sontheimer, "Nation und Nationalismus in der Bundesrepublik," in *Die Gesellschaft in der Bundesrepublik, Analysen 11* (Göttingen: Vandenhoek & Ruprecht, 1971), p. 144.

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of its democratic foundations.[15] While none of these "conservative" arguments were directed against the West (on the contrary, they defended NATO's anti-communism against the "utopian" democratic demands of the domestic opposition), they could still lead to a return of clearly German anti-democratic traditions.

Ernst Nolte's argument that today's nationalism is a defensive one, i.e., defensive insistance on identity needed in light of the necessary drive toward European unity, is not enough to prevent the rise of the offensive, aggressive and divisive aspects of past nationalism.[16] It fails to address the difficulties inherent in deriving a national sense of unity from the profound discontinuities of German history. Those attempting to derive a German identity from German history never clearly confront this central problem. Stürmer is no exception: to his credit, he has always been careful to pose the German identity problem as a question, not an answer. But his proclivities seem clear: the 1949 German Constitution, the Basic Law, did not prevent a "loss of history" and German identity can (only?) be derived from its history.[17] Stürmer argues that Germany is an economy searching for a political purpose and a community without identity. But as with any nation, Germany needs meaning and togetherness to gain values which generate consensus and "inner peace." Stürmer's main objective is revealed in his claim that without "common ground" the contemporary pluralism of values will "sooner or later lead to social civil war, like at the end of the Weimar Republic."[18]

Stürmer's central question is: does the modern state need ethical foundations? Does it need a higher foundation, the kind that, "after the demise of religion, only the nation and patriotism were able to deliver?" Or can it be based merely on the "legitimacy of regular procedures?" He is obviously not persuaded by the latter alternative, given his deep skepticism toward modernity and the "deep insecurity" allegedly prevailing in Germany. He is not attracted by a conservatism based on the "rule of law" or a democratic *Rechtsstaat*. He is convinced that Germans need political transcendence. Scepticism and pragmatic utilitarianism are not enough to sustain allegiance to democracy: "the turn towards new doctrines of salvation has already begun."[19] While it is

15. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
16. Cf. Ernst Nolte, "Die unvollständige Revolution," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (January 24, 1991), No. 20, p. 27.
17. Cf. Weidenfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 184.
18. *Ibid.* p. 84. This argument is not limited to Germans. Thus, Alisdair in *On Virtue McIntyre* claims that today politics is simply the conduct of civil war by other means.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 86 and 99.

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not clear where Stürmer sees the evidence of such a turn (unless he is referring to the limited appeal of ecological utopianism), he is obviously oblivious to the dangers associated with collective forms of political "transcendence." This lack of sensitivity is especially surprising in a historian, but also in light of the Federal Republic's positive experiences with sober pragmatism. His attitude bespeaks deep insecurities about the solidity of pluralistic Germany.

If Stürmer is right, then contemporary Germany is in a position reminiscent of its period of unification around 1871. In his path-breaking work on German nationalism, Helmut Plessner describes how the new Reich's longing for unity created a dilemma of historicism (*Verlegenheitshistorismus*) in a people unprepared for unity. After 1871, Germans were insecure, lacking strong, continuous traditions like other Western nations. They had to compensate for this lack "by deriving a sense of its existence from the sources of its own development." This was accomplished by raising the nation to new heights. In the realm of ideas Germany is grounded in a search for "origins and goals of a German existence in history and philosophy."[20] But now that Germany is part of the West, the reconstruction of its history would differ dramatically from the one popularized after 1871. When Western Europe returns to its origins it returns to the fount of civilization and universality: the "heroic epoch of its nations." Its nationalism, based on its history, can thus present itself as the precursor of the humanistic principles of freedom, progress and international solidarity. If Germany returns to its history it finds in the centuries of the formation of the modern world the period of its decay: its political and spiritual dependence on France, its fragmentation and its emiseration."[21] Is Plessner's depiction less true today than it was after 1871?

The extreme nationalist Bernard Willms thinks so. Thus he has proposed that German political thinking become *Nationalphilosophie*.[22] Accordingly, the entire intellectual life of the modern Federal Republic is marked by its origin in the "total defeat" of 1945. Moreover, "the situation of Germans continues to be determined by that total defeat." What is generally regarded as "liberation" from Hitler and National Socialism[23]

20. Cf. Helmut PIessner, *Die verspätete Nation* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 96ff.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 78
22. Bernard Willms, "Politische Ideengeschichte, Politikwissenschaft und Philosophie," in Udo Bermbach, ed., *Politische Ideengeschichte* (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1984), pp. 33 ff.
23. Weizsäcker speech quoted by James, *op. cit.*, p 203.

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Willms views exclusively as the total defeat of "the Germans." Allegedly, the atrocities of the Hitler regime were used by the "victors" as part of their war-strategy to bring about the Germans' "moral subordination" so they could accept their moral "salvation," their political consciousness, their orientation or *Weltanschauung* from the victors. Any effort to reconstruct self-consciousness was prevented, thus turning "the defeat into a permanent condition."[24]

One way of dealing with defeat, says Willms, is for the victims to attempt to "imitate the victor." The implication here is that Germans need to reassert their national identity. The nation, Willms maintains, is the all encompassing reality. Self-determination and struggle for the nation as well as existence in the form of the state, is the essence of politics. Concretely, reconstructing German national self-consciousness means rethinking classic German philosophy, German idealism, and thereby to begin to mark the end of defeat. Thus Willms' proposal for national philosophy issues in the questions: is there a German idea (of politics)? Is there a German idea of freedom? Is there a German democracy? Is there a German nation? The implication is that for Germans the democracy and freedom forced upon them by those who defeated the Hitler regime are inadequate: only German democracy and German freedom will suffice. Since their existence is so far merely a question mark, the result of Willm's program for a nationalistic philosophy are still outstanding.

Verfassungspatriotismus

Regardless of whether Habermas' charges about a neoconservative attempt to rethink the "uniqueness" of Nazi history were justified, he was correct in claiming that the real issue in the *Historikerstreit* was German self-understanding.[25] He charged neoconservatives, especially Stürmer, with uncritically reasserting a nationalism oblivious to the political dangers involved. Basing national self-determination and identity on a meaning derived from German history not only conjured up the well-known dangers of "historical consciousness" as substitute for religion[26] but also ignored the main lesson of German history: that its profound discontinuities made it impossible to garner a coherent sense of "prereflective — intuitive and habitual (i.e., traditional) national identity." This insight (and thus the need for a critical approach

24. Willms, *op. cit.*, p. 55.
25. Habermas, *Schadensabwicklung*, *op. cit.*, p. 162
26. *Ibid.*, p. 134

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to the German past) had become a post-war German commonplace only now broken by neoconservatives.

The German experience with National Socialism catastrophically destroyed a tension intrinsic to modern nationalism ever since the French Revolution between the "universalistic value-orientation of the *Rechtsstaat*, on the one hand, and the particularism of the nation distinguishing itself from the outside."[27] In addition, a nationalism predicated on an identity based primarily on a common cultural heritage of history, language and literature and a homogeneous people has always been a myth.[28] Even if its program was partially realized, it created minority problems which belied its intentions. The obvious point about 20th century German history is that, especially under Hitler, the balance between universalistic elements and the particularities of German identity was broken in favor of the aggressive assertion of the latter. This experience rules out any simple appeal to German particularism.

Habermas further argues that the great accomplishment of postwar West Germany has been its integration in the West and thus the affirmation of the universalistic elements of democracy and human rights. On the basis of this experience it is now possible for the first time to create a "new form of national identity" (which Habermas unfortunately sometimes refers to as post-traditional or post-conventional) in which the balance between universal principles of democracy and particular factors of German history create a collective identity clearly guided by the universalism of human rights and democratic republicanism. In this new constallation the "imperatives of national self-determination" no longer determine the conduct of the democratic constitutional state. Instead, constitutions and the "generalizable postulates of democracy and human rights" set the "limits" of such national power.[29] Habermas does not deny the role of nationalism, but limits its significance and thus its potential perversions.

Even Habermas' appeal to *Verfassungspatriotismus* and his rejection of any "prepolitical" *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* as the foundation of collective identity do not deny its existence. But he prefers to discuss "national self-consciousness" in terms of the more general historical milieu. Thus he knows it was a "network of inescapable familial, local, political and intellectual traditions" which "made us into what and who we are today.[30] In

27. *Ibid.*, p. 165
28. *Ibid.* 132
29. *Ibid.*, 167.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

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addition, he is aware of a specific German philosophical "mentality." Most importantly, this historical milieu and this German mentality must still be held responsible for the crimes of the Third Reich. Precisely because of the profound *political* discontinuities of recent German history, responsibility can only be assessed on the basis of belonging to this *pre-political* historical milieu, i.e., the German "nation."

Consequently, Habermas firmly rejects the view that German history can bring forth, without irresponsible distortions, a politically useful German identity. What he calls for, instead of the monolithic meaning desired by neoconservatives, is what he detects among "younger Germans": "a tentative attitude towards their own history rather than a naive identification with it." They are more impressed by German historical discontinuities than by its continity. Most importantly, "national pride and a feeling of collective self-esteem" is filtered by "universal value orientation."[31]

It is precisely these discontinuities in German history which make anything but a critical attitude unacceptable. Moreover, such a critical disposition needs principles transcending the history under scrutiny: they must be universalizable. These principles are the premises of democratic constitutionalism. Thus the identity of democratic Germans does not consist of substantive characteristics elicited from history but is a historically specific "mode of public, discursive dispute about the interpretation of a constitutional patriotism."[32] The pluralism of modern German society and a critical reflection concerning the various experiences of German history require that modern collective identity be conceived as unending public debate rather than a mandated one-dimensional symbol of a historically derived identity.

But if Habermas' critique of chauvinism and aggressive nationalism rejects all identification of citizens and the national state as a political association, he also eliminates the "independence of politics as concrete practice." He substitutes for politics morality as embodied in the constitution. This has led people like Ulrich Övermann to charge that the "constitutional, concrete statehood of a political association" consists not only of the constitution but of the "political practice of this concrete state as a practice that cannot be reduced to anything else."[33] Habermas, however, rejects such arguments. Even his recognition of a pre-political community does not make reference to an independent

31. *Ibid.*, p. 135.
32. Habermas, *Die Zeit*, *op. cit.*
33. Ulrich Övermann, in *Merkur*, No. 2, Vol. 44 (February 1990), p. 97.

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political sphere. It should be obvious that the dangers of power politics, entirely severed from moral or constitutional principles, is more frightening to Habermas than the reductionism of which Övermann is so afraid. Again, even a cursory reflection on the course of modern German history should warn against giving unqualified support to national identity based on an independent political sphere.

Republican Nationalism?

Henrich explicitly rejects Habermas' alleged position that political identity ought to be based exclusively on *Verfassungspatriotismus* and Bubner explicitly praises Henrich's combination of nationalism and republicanism as an alternative to Habermas' views. While aware that Germany's experience with aggressive national self-assertion renders any talk of nationalism suspect, Henrich nevertheless supports a particular kind of nationalism. He returns to a concept of the nation as common cultural practices which has its own tradition in German history. It is a variation on the theme of "romantic nationalism." He accepts the Weberian notion of the nation.[34] Accordingly, a nation is constituted by the accepted values of a people sharing living practices *(Lebenspraxis)*. "Nation, in its subjective constitution, which is the only real one, is always a variable."[35] A nation is essentially a community of values. The new German nation is a living community *(Lebensgemeinschaft)* consisting of a shared "mentality" based on shared values. Henrich leaves no doubt, however, that in the German constellation of values the "republican component" must have "priority," as "the core and *conditio sine qua non*."[36] A strong argument for unification is the fact that in their "clear rejection of a socialist fiction of the nation" the Germans have demonstrated that they had a life of their own *(Eigenleben)*. Thus, despite the obvious deformations of German history, they proved to be a *Volk* for which the political unity of a republic was the appropriate mode of collective life.[37]

For Henrich the main constituents of this community of values are living practices and value orientations reaching back to the Thirty Years War and crucial to the bourgeois society of 18th century Germany. He also claims that Germans value an orderly everyday life necessary to provide "consistency and reliability." These are "modest factors" of

34. Henrich, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
35. *Ibid.*, p. 29.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
37. *Ibid.*, p. 31.

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a mentality which become formative conditions of German cultural creativity. Since Luther, Bach, Kant, Herder et al. this has led to the uniquely German conviction that the highest accomplishments cannot be divorced from the "deeper understanding reached in the context of everyday life."[38] Henrich is trying to rethink the meaning of a uniquely German culture in order to allow the "growing together" of a German mentality and its culture and a "republican constitution of life."[39] He returns to German idealism's reaction to the French Revolutions of 1789 and 1848. Only today, in the aftermath of unexpected German unification, will true national unity provide the opportunity to freely utilize the "potentials" contained in the German mentality — this time without the conformism, pretense and elitist claims to a German particular path.[40] Instead, Germany will experience a "smooth continuity" between prepolitical culture and a republican constitution found in countries like Switzerland and the US.[41]

The question that arises here is whether Henrich's abstract depictions of a traditional German mentality suffice to sustain a "republican culture." After all, it was that same mentality, that same orderliness of everyday life and lack of aristocratic demeanor which failed so dismally in preventing its most grotesque perversions. Thus Henrich's list needs further elaboration. His account of post-war West German life muddles this issue. He claims that after 1949 the unfolding of a unique German mentality was hindered in both East and West. Divided between the two fronts, Germany's position in the Cold War generated pressure for conformity even in the West. Germans were somehow influenced by a desire for international approbation, which destroyed creativity and resulted in a general apprehension among intellectuals. Contrary to the frequently expressed fears of German arrogance, Henrich claims that it was precisely this German apprehension that made its neighbors uneasy.[42]

Henrich's commitment to republican politics is impeccable, but his understanding of its cultural underpinnings, German or otherwise, is questionable. It is surprising to find him claiming that living practices of the former West Germany, integrated for the first time into Western culture and enjoying more freedom and diversity than ever, were

38. *Ibid.*, pp. 29 and 30.
39. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
42. *Ibid.*, p. 48.

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"alienated" from their true German mentality. Allegedly, German alienation, caused by a lack of full national independence as a member of the Western World, led to conformity, desire for approval by "others" and lack of creativity. Is this yet another appeal to counterbalance American mass-culture with genuine German culture? If so, then Henrich is the latest victim of the not exclusively German conviction that the pathologies of European and American culture can be healed by rejuvenating some more fundamental, durable and pure national "life."

With his emphasis on the alienation and apprehension of German postwar culture, Henrich inadvertently reveals the negative, defensive side of nationalism. Germans are invited to turn inwards in order to fend off alienating foreign influences, thus overlooking the extent to which German alienation is a function of German domestic politics or regional, religious or cultural tensions. Thomas Nipperdey has recently argued that various versions of cultural nationalism similar to Henrich's were a reaction to French European dominance (before and after the French Revolution) and against modernity, abstract individualism, and the destruction of *Heimat*. These early affinities between nationalism and German liberalism, however, were basically democratic in character. According to Nipperdey, "starting with the idea of a *Volk* constituted by its language and culture is no less democratic than taking citizenship and voluntaristic notions of popular sovereignty as one's starting point."[43] *Volk* and nation are as legitimate bases for democracy as are individual natural rights, constitutional union, and citizenship. This is also Henrich's position and constitutes the main point of contention between today's democratic German nationalists and the advocates of *Verfassungspatriotismus*. While recent German conservative democrats are returning to a Rousseauean notion of a culturally unified folk, in the aftermath of socialism's demise, the democratic Left is flirting with concepts of citizenship, "civil society" and pluralism more clearly derived from the Anglo-American tradition.

Conclusion

Among Western nations, Germany is not alone in its search for a collective identity, national character and purpose[44] — a search which is part of every modern democracy's internal political dialogue. Ultimately

43. Thomas Nipperdey, *Nachdenken über die deutsche Geschichte* (Munich: C.H.Beck, 1986), p. 123 ff.

44. Cf. essays in Peter Reichel, ed., *Politische Kultur in Westeuropa* (Frankfurt/New York: Campus Verlag, 1984).

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such a search for identity, both individual and collective, is an essential part of the modern quest for "self" in a context of rapid change. But this accelerating process of change has made the notion of national "self" ever more elusive. Thus Habermas speaks of a "post-modern" sense of identity which simply relinquishes the nation. Under novel circumstances he harks back to the notion of world-citizen prevailing in Enlightenment Germany prior to unification.[45] But cosmopolitanism has yet to replace the nation as the basic political agency.

While the various perversions of nationalism are well documented, the nation continues to exist. Contemporary Germany was born out of the most dramatic and extreme political change imaginable: from criminal racism to constitutional democracy committed to human dignity. While it was the Western alliance rather than the Germans who defeated Hitler, the Germans did constitute themselves politically in 1949 on the basis of shared principles and the 1989 East German uprising took place in the name of Western republican democracy. The Federal Republic has been an unprecedented success. And while its culture did exhibit the sense of alienation lamented by Henrich, it is doubtful that it was caused by foreign influences. On the contrary: a more exclusively introspective post-war Germany would have more easily succumbed to the temptations of its ambiguous intellectual traditions. Germany's sense of political identity, however, was marred by national and political division as well as the "burden" of a problematic past. Both the catastrophic discontinuities of the past and the constitutionally mandated task of overcoming the post-war division were bound to keep alive the German quest for national selfhood. No appeal to democratic universalism as the sole source of political identity could adequately deal with problems arising from the contingencies of German history.

All this does not help clarify the murky notion of nationalism, much less its contemporary significance for *political* identity. German conservative nationalists appeal to the "normalcy" of national identity and continuity prevailing among the classic Western nations such as Great Britain, France, and the US. They see that normalcy as a result of the

45. Its defeat by nationalism was lamented by Heinrich Heine: "So . . . the beginning of a shabby, clumsy, unwashed opposition to the sentiment which is the very highest and holiest which Germany ever brought forth, namely, that humanity, that universal fraternization of mankind, that cosmopolitanism to which our great minds, Lessing, Herder, Schiller, Goethe, and Jean Paul were ever devoted." Cf. Heinrich Heine, "The Romantic School," in *The Works of Heinrich Heine*, trans. by Charles Godfrey Leland (New York: Croscup and Sterling, 1920), Vol. 10, p. 271.

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congruence between national particularities and the universality of their political principles. It was those nations' particular developments which generated indigenously the universal principles of republicanism and democracy. Such "normalcy" is unattainable to Germans. Consequently, German national identity is more intensely dependent on present and future performance than on the past. While the desire for roots and continuity is understandable, its role in identity formation must not obliterate self formation by virtue of past and present practices. Its cultural identity is not any less significant because of this comparative lack of political normalcy. On the contrary, German critiques of the modern world remain particularly instructive. Yet Germany's philosophy cannot sustain contemporary German politics.

So what is the attraction of national identity? Why do some German thinkers still feel "alienated" by the "Western" way of life and long for a uniquely German "life-context?" Why is *German* freedom preferable to just "freedom?" What is to be gained by living the "German good life," rather than just the good life? The answer is simple: like everyone else, the Germans are entitled to put themselves first, as long as their egoism is kept within the bounds of civility, moderation and respect for others, i.e., as long as the Germans avoid the excesses of their recent past. Is this not the lesson of recent German history, i.e., the refutation of radical German historicism denying the existence of universal standards beyond national experience? Willms' claim that the nation is the ultimate reality is untenable. His argument leads him to the absurd position of claiming that those who defeated Hitler forced Germany into democracy — a form of government shared by all "Western" nations but nevertheless demeaning to Germany until it can have its "own" version based on its own history.

The issue here has to do with the relation in political life between particular and universal, between what is good and right for human beings in general and the fact that all articulations of life are necessarily unique. But even radical historicists must acknowledge that today a variety of particular nations subscribe to democracy as a transnational value rather than as the outcome of a particular national history. A radical nationalist would be a democrat if his own particular national history resulted in democracy. A genuine democrat would argue that democracy is worthwhile *even if* his or her own national history militated against it. Given German history, a German would need to be a democrat first and a nationalist second.

German nationalists want to retain uniqueness and be different

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from other Western nations, but this time without locating this uniqueness in anti-Western values leading to a German special path. They insist on a unique German notion of democratic republicanism which will enable them to remain distinctive as a respectable member of the "family of democratic nations." While this seems *prima facie* unobjectionable, it is suspect in light of past German experience as long as present appeals to German uniqueness remain vague. And they must remain so as long as national uniqueness is based on the German historical experience. Thus the German nationalists' arguments move in a vicious circle of suspicion. Stürmer's and Willms' nationalist appeals remain suspect not because they are nationalist but because they expound ambiguous generalities and ignore the unique feature of the German national experience. While aware of the fundamental reality of a historical living context supporting all politics in particular settings, Habermas downplays the contingent uniqueness of such settings by referring to a universal *Lebenswelt*. He dissolves contingency into a permanent utopian process of communicative discourse. Bubner is correct in claiming that Henrich's position is the most adequate. Henrich is correct in stressing the need of a republican culture for a republican constitution. But he does not convincingly show that his abstractly articulated German mentality amounts to such a culture. Furthermore, while he blames a vague German sense of alleged alienation and apprehension on the influence of non-German "ways of life," he is unable to identify the differences between the putative German alienated, uncreative life and the foreign influences which make it so. More importantly, while he speaks of the concordance between uniquely German "mentalities" and republicanism, he does not spell out the essential elements of a "republican culture." Nor does he show that the Western ways of life allegedly influencing German culture are less republican.

National identity is more than what "history has made us," especially if that history has brought forth two contradictory regimes. Given the complexities of German history, German identity can only be based on parts of that history, i.e., those parts conducive to principles now guiding Germany's republicanism, constitional government and democracy. Maintaining democratic sovereignty and a democratic culture under contemporary conditions of international interdependence and competition is difficult. If various facets of the German past help sustain such a contemporary culture, Germany can consider itself fortunate. In the more recent debate about German nationalism the European factor

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is mostly noted by its insignificance. Characteristically, as the quest for German national identity is mainly a series of interpretive responses to questions of the specifically German past, the future possibility of a genuine European political identity is not yet a strong enough presence to dominate those interpretations. However, it is, of course, highly significant that almost the entire domestic German debate about national identity shares not only Habermas' basic assumption of Germany's inclusion in "Western culture," but also assumes the permanent cessation of ancient European hostilities. German national identity is no longer to emerge in a new version of the *Sonderweg* at the expense of its European neighbors but in concert with them. National uniqueness is perceived in terms of the pluralistic coexistence and mutually enriching interactions of identities, not their mutual denigration, much less the threat of mutual obliteration. Thus the ongoing process of European unification, however laborious, already delimits nationalism, even if the final European identity is still nothing more than a distant goal.

It is well-known that the members of the EC have yet to agree on the political and organizational mode of such a future Europe. They differ according to their own national peculiarities, traditions and concrete interests as to how nations ought to survive in the new common "House of Europe." Consequently, at this stage the concept of a European identity is at best vague, indefinite, inconclusive and too imprecise to compete against highly complex and problematic national identities based on centuries of history. This problem could be further exacerbated as former member-nations of the defunct Soviet Empire are admitted. Furthermore, the tensions and outright conflict between the forces of such traditional identities, the imperatives of ongoing European unification, and the varying notions about future European identity are bound to increase as the need to relinquish essential national and state sovereignty approaches. Nobody knows the final outcome of these tensions and conflicts. This is especially the case as long as aggressive, negativistic, exclusionist nationalism remains a serious threat in most European nations among mainly lower middle-class and lower-class populations suffering most from rapid, politically uncontrolled economic change. The success of future European political union depends crucially on the continued success of what is increasingly considered the merely preliminary stage of economic union.

The extent to which national questions and interests influence the Europe of the future is exemplified by the German European policy. German conservatives argue that the price for monetary union is an increase

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in political union guaranteeing standardized fiscal and monetary policies in the German tradition. Simultaneously, the German conservative government coalition must insist upon increasing the powers of the European parliament (as well as salvaging its own federalism) in order to make the relinquishment of its own sovereignty palatable to the German electorate. France, although in agreement with Germany on the desirability of political union, disagrees fundamentally on the modes of political Europe. Interested in harnessing future German power to a united Europe in which French political influence would be considerable, France cannot allow a political structure in which German power would too clearly predominate. Divergent national interests and national habits compete in the establishment of a new Europe intended to preserve such divergences while subordinating them to a new identity.

Except at the level of consumer styles and orientations, media and entertainment standards, mass tourism and "popular culture" in general, one cannot (yet) speak of the growth of a unified European culture and the "elite" sustaining it. Indeed, a trend toward national diversification and egocentrism appears stronger at the moment — and is welcomed by many. Perhaps a common popular culture in combination with such national (or, as likely, regional and metropolitan) diversity of "high culture" is a more desirable future model. This might not please those who advocate "cultural nationalism," but might satisfy all those cultural pluralists cognizant of the concomitant need for some kind of common European cultural identity. It is highly unlikely that one substantive European high culture could overcome the presently dominant forces of self-indulgent, increasingly apolitical individualism and group pluralism, together with the celebration of marginals. But it is, at the same time, an open question whether the developing common culture, interspersed with remnants of older "*Volkskulturen*," can suffice to sustain a common European "mentality" during times of economic and political crisis. To judge by past experience, however, high culture is even less likely to serve.

In light of these brief ruminations, it should be clear why the contemporary debate about German democracy and nationalism has taken place within the narrower perspectives outlined here. The shared Western adherence to individual rights, constitutional government and democracy, together with the imperatives of international trade, commitment to consumer societies and a common European "fate" (strengthened by competition with North America and Japan) have so far sufficed to limit aggressive forms of nationalism. What diverse

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forms the different democracies of Europe will adopt within these limits, or under precisely what circumstances such limits will disappear, is largely unpredictable. This is certainly true for the case of the newly united Germany.

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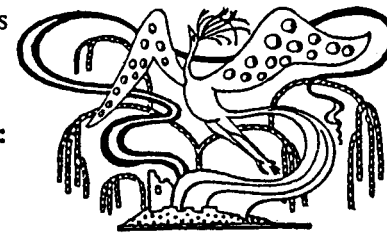

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Special Section on Poland:

The Crisis of Liberalism in Poland

David Ost

Recent parliamentary elections in Poland have confirmed what had long been obvious: that the veteran liberal opposition, the intellectual ideologues of the "independent civil society" — Michnik, Kuron, and the old KOR milieu, presently grouped around the Democratic Union and the newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* (but not the small, recently-formed, liberal Democratic Party, the pro-Walesa Gdansk party of former prime minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki) — have finally lost out. Although the Democratic Union won 13.8% of the vote, making it the largest party of a divided parliament, just barely ahead of the former Communists, the depth of their isolation was revealed after the elections when their efforts to put together a governmental majority failed miserably. Four smaller right-leaning parties put together their own majority instead, leading to the appointment of Jan Olszewski, vice-president of the Center Alliance, as Prime Mnister, and the confirmation of Wieslaw Chrzanowski, leader of the nationalist Christian Natonal Union, as speaker of the house.

Liberals are in crisis everywhere in Eastern Europe. It is not so much economic as political liberalism that is in danger. Although there are serious alternatives to economic liberalism, such as the emphasis on small-scale firms, flexible specialization, and employee participation in economic restructuring, such proposals currently enjoy little support among domestic elites or Western creditors (and a main reason for the attitude of the former is the attitude of the latter). But when economic liberalism fails to deliver the promised goods, people look for alternatives to bring about the relief that was, after all, the goal of the 1989 revolutions. Here is where political liberalism fails. It has nothing to offer disgruntled people except respect for democratic rules. In the post-Communist era, however, people are looking for new meanings. The commitment to liberal democratic rules may satisfy the professional, New Class community of administrators. But as Western experience has taught, liberalism is no friend of community. It breaks up non-professional, residential communities as effectively as Communist rule ever did. Indeed, it is this longing for authentic community that Christopher Lasch and others see as central to the decline of liberalism in the West.[1]

1. Christopher Lasch, "Liberalism and Civic Virtue," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991).

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This longing is much stronger in the post-Communist East. There people expected true community to be achieved through a liberal, pro-Western realignment. The "civil society" ideologies of liberal intellectuals dovetailed with the organicist Catholic aspirations of clericalists and the chauvinistic longings of nationalists. Liberal intellectuals were ill-positioned to retain their dominance. Their alliance with workers, which reached its peak with the Solidarity movement, was due to break down after the demise of the common enemy. Does this mean that liberalism is going to be replaced by some kind of democratic populism, as Lawrence Goodwyn believes is possible, and as Lasch is hoping for in the West? Or will the result be hatred, national chauvinism and other ills of pre-modern authoritarian populism?

Before discussing the crisis of liberalism in Poland, a word needs to be said about Goodwyn's account.[2] For Goodwyn, there is no problem explaining the collapse of the worker-intellectual alliance, because in his view it never existed. His writings on the subject share one common feature: they are concerned exclusively with the *rise* of Solidarity and not with the nature of the organization that Solidarity became. Just as he accuses others, correctly, of making a magical leap from the intellectuals' ideas to the practices of millions of people, he himself makes an unexplained connection between how Solidarity was formed and the kind of organization it became. He correctly points out that liberal intellectuals were skeptical of workers in 1980 to the point of urging workers to drop the demand for independent trade unions, and argues therefore that workers — not intellectuals — created Solidarity. But then he claims that, *after* the Gdansk Accord, Solidarity remained a workers' organization with an authentic underlying theory of democratic empowerment that intellectuals, concerned for their own class interests, have been trying their best to destroy.[3]

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2. Lawrence Goodwyn, "Rethinking Populism," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991); and *Breaking the Barrier: The Rise of Solidarnosc in Poland* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

3. I have myself emphasized the role of intellectuals in the creation of Solidarity. I did so, however, because I was interested in Solidarity's politics, not its origins. The ideological assumptions and the ideas of oppositionist intellectuals such as Kuron and Michnik, who debated union policy not only in the Solidarity press but in the highest official union circles as well, seemed better able to explain the observable changes in Solidarity's policies than the particular origins of the strike movement itself. Cf. David Ost, *Solidarity and the Politics of Anti-Politics* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990). That intellectuals would play a key role in the political dealings of Solidarity seems to follow from Goodwyn's own methodological assumptions. Goodwyn's response to those who privilege ideas in social movements is that "social knowledge is experiential." What he means is that Polish workers in 1980 were able to construct an organizationally brilliant strike movement and to insist on the centrality of independent trade unions not because intellectuals were writing about the need to reconstruct "civil society" but because workers themselves had had the long experiences of battling the regime in defense of their interests. This same approach grants intellectuals a privileged position in Solidarity after 1980. Although workers did learn from their own experience how to fight for independent trade unions, nothing prepared them to challenge

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Goodwyn's claim that all talk about intellectual predominance in Solidarity has only "served the short- and long-term political self-interest" of the Polish intelligentsia, KOR, and their elitist New Class "surrogates" in the West[4] runs into one major problem: Solidarity won. And as soon as it came to power in 1989 its government and parliament, made up of intellectuals and dominated by the old KOR network, introduced a radical anti-working-class marketization program. Not all marketization programs are anti-working-class, but this one definitely was, with its de-emphasis of employee participation and its encouragement of domestic recession and foreign investment as a way of building sound economic foundations. Goodwyn's argument would have been more convincing had Solidarity lost. Then Solidarity could be held as a unique democratic popular movement that could have done great things if only it had not been crushed by the elite. If Solidarity had suffered the fate of that movement Goodwyn knows best, American populism, his analysis of Solidarity would have made more sense.

Michnik and the Crisis of Liberalism

How can the weakness of Polish liberalism and the breakup of the worker-intellectual alliance be explained? Mira Marody and Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski argue that there is simply no social base for liberal democracy in contemporary Poland.[5] People are too local-oriented, traditional and tied to obsolete communities. They are unwilling to be propelled into 20th century secular modernity that liberals see as the precondition for all else. John Michael points to the other problem facing old liberal dissidents. With their universalist, Enlightenment values, they are simply inappropriate for the present times.[6]

Michnik has always been an Enlightenment intellectual. From the beginning of his political involvement in the early 1960s his main fight has been for individual freedom against state repression. Up through the 1970's he called himself a socialist, but he understood socialism primarily as the defense of individual rights against an oppressive state. Along with liberal Western social democrats he supported popular participation and limits on private property. But even these communitarian sentiments were embraced only because they seemed conducive to the overriding goal of securing individual freedoms. When he changed his mind on both these points in the 1980s, distrusting workers' participation because too many workers seemed susceptible to demagogy and embracing private property because the maintenance of state property gave the state too much power, he was still loyal to the same goals as always. His evolution on the property question was similar to that of liberal

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the Communist Party politically. Only intellectuals had experience in shaping and reshaping the state.

4. Goodwyn, "Rethinking Populism," *op. cit.*, p. 47.
5. Cf. their accounts in this issue of *Telos*.
6. John Michael, "The Intellectual in Uncivil Society: Michnik, Poland and Community," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 141-154.

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Western social democrats, while his distrust of workers reflected a belief that since rational, universal values were not likely to win majorities in a post-communist future, the rational-legal rules central to a modern society (and to Michnik's own notion of community) could only be introduced by intellectuals.

Michnik's implausible wish to hold to the false unity of the past, expressed so innocently in the interview printed below, dissolved in 1990, when there was no outside enemy forcing society together. Walesa finally felt strong enough to break with the intellectuals who had helped him negotiate the 1989 compromise that ended Communist Party rule. Angered by the virtual monopoly on power that Michnik's old liberal social democratic tendency had on the first post-communist government and parliament, a group of largely excluded Gdansk political activists, recongnizing that democratic politics gave them opportunities denied them by the corporatist politics of the old Warsaw-Cracow opposition, broke from the Solidarity Civic Committee and created their own party, the Center Alliance. This new tendency denounced Michnik et. al as illegitimate usurpers unfit to serve because of their socialist past and their fetishization of rational-legal rules. Since such rules allowed communists to continue to thrive in a post-Communist system, the Center Alliance said they should be suspended in order to finish the revolution once and for all. They noted that the Round Table accord of 1989 was negotiated before it was known for sure how the Soviets would respond. Now that the events of late 1989 showed that anything was possible, there was no reason to accept the earlier deal.

The Center Alliance was taunting Michnik with the moralistic language of which he had been undisputed master. He had used it to mobilize universal support for liberal democratic rules. Now that those rules were in place, he wanted to tone down the moralism in order to quash the expectations it arouses. Yet his own moralistic denunciation of "communist totalitarianism" as the source of almost all social ills had given rise to improbable hopes about a post-communist future that his rivals were easily able to use against him.

For all of these reasons, Michael is right in pointing to the obsolescence of Michnik's views (and, in particular, of Michnik himself, since others, such as Kuron, have proved more willing to engage in the concrete policy discussions that keeps him in the political mainstream). Surprisingly, Michnik agrees with this assessment. He acknowledges that he is not well-suited for the present political struggles. His plaintive wish is that there simply be no political struggles. Just as people were united in the past, so ought they be today, under the same general program of freedom and justice, and with the same liberal intellectuals trying to define for the population what these values mean and what concrete policies they entail. Michnik feels the enlightened political class was governing responsibly until the Center Alliance and other "irresponsible" elements destroyed that unity in 1990. He pines for a return to the days when his voice and stature seemed to preclude internal division by uniting all right thinking people behind the fight against the Communists for freedom and justice.

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Intellectuals and Labor: An Alliance of Misunderstanding

In 1980 a group of Warsaw intellectuals traveled to the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk to lend their support to the strikers. The Interfactory Strike Committee voted to put them on a newly-formed "committee of experts." When the strike ended successfully with the signing of the Gdansk Accord, the strike leadership publicly and emotionally thanked the intellectuals for their support. During the next year Bronislaw Geremek and Tadeusz Mazowiecki, leaders of the original Gdansk team, became two of Walesa's closest advisers, and veteran KOR activists like Michnik, Kuron, and Litynski became important regional and national union advisers. In 1989 Geremek, Kuron, and Michnik played the dominant role on the Solidarity side of the Round Table negotiations and in the government that emerged from it. This alliance of workers and intellectuals became one of the key myths of Solidarity throughout the 1980s. In 1990 the end of that unity was symbolized by the acrimonious presidential campaign between Walesa and Mazowiecki. Although supported by almost the entire Solidarity Round Table contingent and the majority of the Warsaw-Cracow intellectual milieu, Mazowiecki suffered a humiliating defeat, beaten not only by Walesa but by the unknown Stan Tyminski.

This shows two things. First, that liberal intellectauals played a major role in Solidarity. They were important enough to be entrusted with the task of negotiating the Party's surrender and legitimate enough for the majority of the population to go along. People voted for Solidarity's Civic Committee candidates in an even greater percentage than its leaders had anticipated, and demanded that their representatives form a government. Second, it shows that within a year after the toppling of the Communist system people were anxious to break with those policies they had accepted before. Candidates that disowned the liberals' policies suddenly had the best electoral chances.

How were intellectuals allowed so easily to take a dominant position in this powerful labor movement? Why did they become so unpopular so quickly after having helped secure the victory everyone had wanted and few had really thought possible? Why did the 1980 worker-intellectual alliance break down so dramatically in 1990? Why was KOR so important in the struggle against the old regime and so obsolete soon afterwards?

Different times require different politics. While the political liberalism of the KOR tendency was particularly appropriate to the needs of the labor movement in the fight against Communist rule, it was particularly inappropriate in the post-Communist period. The alliance between the labor movement and liberal intellectuals was based on a fundamental misunderstanding and perceived tactical necessities. Labor leaders felt they could gain support from an intelligentsia that had definite skills in bargaining with power; the Solidarity rank and file could accept this since intellectuals articulated an approach that was in labor's interests. That both the Center Alliance and Goodwyn need to spend so much time denigrating the credibility of Michnik and the entire old KOR milieu is testimony to the political significance this circle has had.

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Of course, it never acted entirely on its own. In the mid-70s this group of secular intellectuals reached out to liberal Catholic circles active in Warsaw and Cracow, represented by Mazowiecki and Jerzy Turowicz, editors of two publications allowing the expression of liberal political views. Michnik sang the praises of these Catholics in his influential 1976 book, *Church — Left — Dialogue*.[7] Subsequent disagreements between these two groups were quarrels among friends. As far as others were concerned, the "Warsaw-Cracow cabal" cited their own disagreements to cover up the fact that they sought to monopolize the opposition. With the role each played as advisers to Solidarity during its legal heyday of 1980-81, as the staff of many of Solidarity's official underground institutions during martial law, as chief Solidarity negotiators in 1989, as close government allies in the first post-Communist government (with Mazowiecki as premier), and as the organizers of an anti-Walesa political bloc in 1990, it is hard to claim that they were not trying to monopolize the opposition. The question is why they were so successful.

KOR was formed soon after the June 1976 strikes, to provide material and legal support to those workers persecuted and prosecuted by the authorities. But if aiding workers was part of KOR's ethos and its activity, it was not part of its program *per se*. That program hinged on the effort to reconstitute an independent "civil society." Eschewing the struggle for state power as both unrealistic and unimportant, the KOR opposition focused its activities on creating broad civic movements to realize and revitalize fundamental democratic principles. The heart of KOR's program was the promotion of public activity, the constitution of an independent public sphere in which all social groups would be able to articulate their interests in a pluralist environment. KOR became active in the effort to build independent unions[8] because it saw them as a way to revitalize civil society and a political public sphere, not because it sought to articulate a particular working class perspective. Although this group still considered itself on the Left (Michnik used the expression "secular Left" in 1976 and has spent the last decade trying to live it down), its last expression of a specifically pro-worker orientation came in the *pre*-KOR era, in 1964, with Kuron and Modzelewski's *Open Letter to the Party*, in which the authors called for a real workers' revolution to overthrow the deformed workers' state. This milieu remained sympathetic to working people, as demonstrated

7. English translation by David Ost (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

8. Goodwyn's attempt to write them out of this history is unconvincing. For example, he acknowledges the enormous role played by Bogdan Borusewicz, but rarely mentions either Borusewicz's intellectual status or the fact that he was KOR's only member from Gdansk. He all but ignores the role of Jan Litynski, another prominent KOR activist, who edited *Robotnik*, an underground paper agitating for independent unions on the Baltic Coast. KOR certainly did not bring Solidarity into being. But it made real practical contributions to the early efforts, while its theorists provided a coherent intellectual framework legitimating the project — a framework that Solidarity, with its anti-politics and its neocorporatist turn, would accept wholeheartedly.

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by its readiness, at considerable personal risk, to form KOR and organize assistance to workers in 1976. But already by 1968 it had abandoned a specifically pro-labor orientation when Michnik and other young, future KOR radicals participated in a student movement that saw itself far more in solidarity with students in the West than with workers in the East.

By the 1970s this group had changed even more, as reflected in KOR's political theory. The problem of state socialism, KOR argued, was not its persecution of workers or its failure to live up to egalitarian Marxist ideals, but its delegitimation of all social activity not sponsored by the state. The heart of the problem was state control as such: the state's subsumption of society. When the enemy became the state, the opposition became liberals. It could and did still defend workers, but it now defended them only as one group among many. The alliance with workers was sincere, but it was not aimed at building a strong labor movement. The goal was to free society from the state — the same slogan with which the bourgeoisie went to the barricades 200 years ago, with critical intellectuals making the universalist claims the bourgeoisie had made then. Why then did workers accept them? Because the liberal program of social self-organization was the indispensable precondition for any workers' movement.

By becoming liberal this group ceased to be socialist (champions of workers' interests) without ceasing to be radical (champions of universalist principles). Because it remained radical, workers could see them as articulating workers' interests too. In the late 20th century liberalism could appear as radicalism and individualism as communitarianism only in a Communist society. So hostile was Communism to the principle of particular interests that the liberal idea of a pluralist society of competing interests clearly appeared to be the solution to all who felt ignored by the Party. The liberal idea of "civil society" means that all groups can at least get their foot in the door. It was an idea that workers demanding independent unions could rightly see as their own.

There is also an important structural basis for the alliance between workers and intellectuals. By suppressing internal class divisions and turning all citizens into state employees, communist rule engenders only collectivist — not particularistic — opposition.[9] Thus, workers in communist society appear to

9. Since the state is the sole employer, all social conflicts are directed at the state, not against other social classes. It is questionable whether "classes" as such even exist in Communist society. Claus Offe makes a useful distinction between "class organizations" and "policy-takers." The former include those organized groups that play a key role in shaping the economy through their role in the market and seek to influence the state to help the market standing of their members. "Policy-takers," on the other hand, are those collectivities shaped not by the market but by the state. Unlike class organizations, they do not exist apart from the state. Both kinds of organizations are present in Western politics. There are class organizations of labor and capital, and policy-takers such as taxpayer associations or local governments. In Communist society, however, there was *nothing but* policy-takers. All organized groups, therefore, had an interest only in opposing the state, not in opposing each other. For each group was shaped by a state that allowed no group other than the state to be in a position where it could

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have no specific interests apart from those of intellectuals, and have little difficulty accepting the liberal program as their own. It is only in post-Communist society, when the government takes steps to reintroduce the market economy and internal class conflicts Leninism had suppressed that workers find they have their own particular interests to defend. At that point, however, their old intellectual allies no longer care to articulate those interests. They are satisfied simply with the end of the old system, particularly as they themselves become the leaders in the new one. The alliance breaks down because the commonality of their interests breaks down.

Workers formed Solidarity on their own in 1980. But once formed it was highly receptive to the liberals' agenda, as can be seen in the prominent role liberals played in the movement up to 1990. Solidarity's allegiance to the liberal agenda was apparent in the policies it chose. It became increasingly unconcerned with specifically workers' issues in the months after it was formed. For example, although the demand for higher wages to compensate price hikes was the issue that brought Polish workers out on strike in the summer of 1980, the wage issue was quicky de-emphasized. The union increasingly showed itself ready to bargain away basic bread-and-butter issues, such as the 5-day work week, in order to get the government to institutionalize Solidarity's existence as a fundamental part of a new, open society. Even the union's pro-self-management group, known as the "Network," was far more an attempt by intellectuals to remove the Party from the business of running the economy than actually to get workers involved.[10] Up to the declaration of martial law Solidarity showed itself ready to sacrifice immediate interests in return for new institutional forms that would guarantee workers the ability to defend those interests in the future.

This decision ultimately facilitated the entire political transformation. But from the viewpoint of the labor movement as such it had long-lasting consequences. It meant that Solidarity was never the workers' movement it claimed to be. The point, however, is that it always claimed to be a workers' movement. So when a Solidarity government came to power and introduced a program that entailed a wholesale attack on labor, workers soon turned against the liberal ideology that had brought them to the impasse, forcing Walesa to break with the government he helped create and to carve out a new ideology, including flirtation with nationalism and populism in order to hold onto power.

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dominate others. In this way, Communist rule succeeds in unifying society — not for the government but against it. Cf. Claus Offe, "The Attribution of Public Status to Interest Groups," in Suzanne D. Berger, *Organizing Interests in Western Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

10. It is no accident that one of the theorists of the Network was none other than Leszek Balcerowicz, the architect of post-Communist "shock therapy."

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Alternatives to Liberalism

What is the basis of the new ideology? What is a non-liberal Eastern Europe going to look like? The two main alternatives to liberalism in Eastern Europe are populism and social democratic corporatism. Liberals argue that the state socialist economy must be transformed quickly into a capitalist market economy, with private property and free movement of capital, in order to bring about full integration into the global economy. They acknowledge that the program entails great social costs, but argue that not embarking on their program will be even costlier. "If you must cut off a cat's tail," they say, "do it in one stroke rather than piece by piece." Populist critics say the liberals are cutting off the tail at the neck.[11] East Europe, they argue, can be quickly integrated into the world economy only as a pauper, not as an equal. The liberal programs will lead to a dangerous recession, mass unemployment, agricultural crisis, and the sale of national wealth to foreign capital that does not have local interests in mind. It will destroy existing social ties and consequently threaten the entire national fabric. Rather than try to copy Western models of development, which took ages to evolve and have frequently produced poverty and social chaos instead of generalized prosperity when tried elsewhere, the populists want to reconstruct the country on the basis of available resources, promote small-scale business and peasant entrepreneurship, and create a domestic bourgeoisie before inviting in a foreign one.

The social democratic corporatist approach shares with the liberals the view that large-scale industry will continue to remain most important and with the populists the commitment to minimizing social costs. It rejects the liberals' view that workers should be left out of the process. On moral grounds, it argues that those who paid the costs for so long and who made possible the 1989 revolutions should not once again be sacrificed in the interests of the future, and points to the difficulties any government that insists otherwise will have in surviving democratically. On economic grounds it argues that neither labor productivity nor the crucial export sector can be increased without worker participation, and it points to post-Fordist technologies as examples of participation facilitating economic growth. Participation is needed to prod management to make the changes that do not follow from monetary manipulation alone. Without an employee stake in reform, management is more likely to try to survive through an alliance with local authorities, as in China, than through rationalization of the firm. The social democratic corporatists do not deny that employee participation might slow the transition, but in the end, they say, it will be more secure if carried out with the consent of the population. Their belief in the value of worker participation leads them to support strong social welfare provisions on economic and moral grounds. But the

11. For an excellent presentation of this populist "third way," without any of the irrational xenophobias such programs frequently imply, see Ivan Szelenyi, "Alternative Futures for Eastern Europe," in *East European Politics and Societies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (Spring 1990).

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charge that they are recycling discarded Western models would be unfair. They recognize that Scandinavian style welfare guarantees cannot be attained and strongly favor marketization in general. Against populists and liberals, however, they argue that markets in post-Communist society cannot be established the way they have been in pre-Communist society.

In this context, are Michnik's appeals to universalism merely rationalizations for the privileges of the new professional class? Clearly, universal bureaucratization will help the class that legislates, just as it has in the West, with all the consequent dangers to the viability of community life. Yet the liberals' appeal to tolerance, pluralism and the protection of individual freedoms remains crucial in societies emerging from authoritarian regimes and lacking long-standing civil libertarian traditions. The question for Poland will be whether the new populism or social democratic corporatism will be able to incorporate liberal principles without having to accept, along with them, New Class domination and all the social problems liberalism has historically generated in the West.

Twice in a year the Polish electorate has indicated that it will not support Michnik's liberal order anytime soon. But contrary to alarmist predictions regularly issued by liberal circles (and repeated by the Western press), this does not mean the imminence of authoritarianism. No significant political tendency is pushing in that direction, and no Western government (the all-important lifeline for Eastern Europe today) is ready to countenance it.

Do the new populists in Poland pose such a threat? That would be a misreading. While some populist critics of liberalism encourage such a misreading with vilifying rhetoric branding those they disagree with as "hostile to the nation," people vote for populist candidates despite, not because of this language. They do so because they are looking for alternatives to a destructive and, in any case, unachievable free-market liberalism. Labeling all critics of liberalism enemies of democracy is part of the electoral strategy of one political camp. To do so in the West is intellectually dishonest. Thus, the Catholic populist leader Chrzanowski was elected Speaker of the House with widespread support because even his opponents see him as a defender of basic democratic rights. Antoni Macierewicz, vice-Minister of Chrzanowski's Catholic National Union and present Minister of Internal Affairs, was himself one of the founders of KOR. Today he offers serious economic proposals for small-scale regional development that may prove crucial for Poland's effort to feed its people and develop specialized export markets at the same time. The leading Polish economic weekly has characterized this party's economic program "left-wing" because of its healthy skepticism of market magic.[12] This is the new face of Polish populism today.

It is premature to say that fears of authoritarian nationalism are baseless. But given Poland's problems the continued support for democratic rules is reassuring. It means that creative political alternatives to an inadequate liberalism are not only necessary, but possible.

12. "Polskie Lego," in *Zycie Gospodarcze* (December 8, 1991).

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*The Three Cards Game: An Interview with Adam Michnik**

Janina Paradowska

Paradowska: Jadwiga Staniszkis claims that "Adam is finished, a victim of the very battle he waged." She is not the only one claiming this. More and more people are talking about the political demise of that intellectual tendency which led Poland and Central Europe to recent changes. Do you also feel it is time to leave center stage?

Michnik: Professor Staniszkis' intellectual constructs usually have only a tenuous relation with reality, as can be seen in her earlier claim that the collapse of communist Europe was a KGB plot. This time, however, I think she is right. The time for people like myself to engage in politics has come to an end.

Paradowska: Who are these people?

Michnik: Those who entered politics out of moral and aesthetic impulse, who rejected "normal" life under communist dictatorship. This meant marginalization and public non-existence. After all, it never occurred to any of us in the late 1960s that everything would just come crashing down in such a spectacular way. We had no idea that virtue would be rewarded or that the label "dissident" would become a ticket to the elite. The choice to live on the margins created a peculiar way of thinking about politics. We were guided not by tactics but by one simple injunction: "Do not compromise." This was the lesson we learned from the experiences of the older generation, who wanted to participate in politics even at the cost of betraying truth. In a sense they were right, for that is the price one usually pays for political participation. But we were not going to pay it. We thought that was the road to hell. Now Communism has passed and we are left with our old impulses, with our peculiar moral pathology.

Paradowska: Politics is becoming normal. Compromise is no longer the "road to hell" but, as you have argued yourself, something increasingly necessary, So why does this "moral pathology" get in the way?

Michnik: I would not blame it all on the actual political situation. Maybe this is

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perfectly normal: that different people are right for different times, that everybody cannot do everything. Yes, today politics is becoming normal, and for those who did not treat politics as a game but as a way to defend basic values it is becoming difficult to find a space. It will become even harder in the future. This could have been anticipated, and there is no need for despair. That is all there is to say about my specific case.

Paradowska: Let us try to look at that specific case from the wider perspective of what has happened in Poland.

Michnik: Moving from a communist system to a democratic order Poland had three trump cards. First there was the philosophy of the Round Table. This was the belief that various forces, including some reformers within the old regime, had come together around a program of social transformation. Despite conflicts over that program, it was possible to believe that we could agree on a project to bring about democracy and economic restructuring. Second, there was Solidarity, a movement that brought together different people from various generations and social circles, united by the idea of a democratic order and by the conviction that solidarity was more important than particular interests. Third, there was the supra-political authority of the Catholic Church and Pope John Paul II, who had been the supreme moral authority for practically all Poles, regardless of their faith. All three have been wasted. The philosophy of the Round Table fell victim to the slogans of "acceleration" and "de-communization." The idea of Solidarity was defeated by [Walesa's] "war at the top." The Church has ceased being a mediator, a witness, a guardian of moral values and has become, often despite itself, one side in the political conflict over the shape of the Polish state. This was not inevitable. It happened because of particular decisions of particular people. The Church, which previously united people, is now becoming an authority only for some. Moreover, Church officials have developed a new language. If those who support a referendum on abortion rights can be compared with the inventors of concentration camps; or the democratic removal of a minister for insulting some citizens can be compared with the Stalinist imprisonment of Cardinal Wyszynski, then I do not know what country I am living in.

Paradowska: You say that none of this was inevitable. Yet you also say that it was possible to anticipate a situation in which various political interests come to the fore and where unity could not be maintained artificially. I see a contradiction here, an inability to provide correct diagnoses and real foresight.

Michnik: As for foresight, you are right. It is easy today to accuse me of naiveté, and I do not regret it. one needs a little naiveté to believe in human honesty, that people can be unselfish and motivated by the common good. In Poland it has not worked out, but it did in Spain, where the same transition from dictatorship to democracy took place under difficult social and economic conditions.

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Paradowska: You like these comparisons with Spain and Chile, but they seem to be only partly appropriate . . .

Michnik: Like all comparisons.

Paradowska: In Poland political life was even more devastated. At least Spain and Chile still had the market and the middle class was not as destroyed.

Michnik: That is true. But in both Chile and Spain the various sides at a crucial moment were able to come to an agreement. For a time all sides agreed to put particularistic interests aside, develop political democracy and reform of the state. I believed that the Solidarity leadership, including its chairman, would understand what is best for Poland. I was wrong.

Paradowska: You mock conspiracy theories of history, but there is an echo of that in your own words. Everything was possible, you say, until a few people with unrestrained ambitions came along, effectively destroying all options.

Michnik: It was not just a few people. These were important political forces, strong parliamentary groups, working together at all stages with our current president, Lech Walesa, and the union he headed. This was no conspiracy because people were indeed frustrated. Empty slogans about "shortcuts" fell on receptive ears. Nevertheless, much depends on how popular frustrations are articulated. My opinion is that without the attacks on the Mazowiecki government on the basis of shortcuts and quick fixes we would not have had the kind of public emotion and frustration we see today.

Paradowska: I have always had the impression that your side has been accusing the other of ill will, regardless of who says what, and vice versa. I, for one, have not seen the Center Alliance (the center-right party that emerged from the old Solidarity coalition) making such a brutal attack on the government. The call for a Walesa presidency did not have to threaten Mazowiecki. The need for quick parliamentary elections has become increasingly obvious. And in light of the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party, abandoning the Round Table accords does not sound dangerous to me.

Michnik: But what did the call for abandoning the Round Table accords mean in the context of our parliament? It only meant an attack on the government. Parliament was also based on an accord, giving the government a majority and allowing it to function. I do not want to idealize the Mazowiecki government. But we have a situation here where the melody makes the song. It is one thing to say that adjustments should be made, and something else entirely to cry "down with the government" because it is supposedly protecting criminals, thieves, and murderers. Everything that has happened since Walesa became president

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shows that this was just empty chatter.

Paradowska: There is also the slogan of "de-communization."

Michnik: Since the elections neither President Walesa nor his staff has "de-communized" anything. At a recent meeting, a Center Alliance member of parliament demanded this "de-communization." I asked him, what does it mean? Are you proposing that I run around from house to house and confiscate rugs and color TVs from former Party activists? Are we supposed to introduce apartheid legislation and specify the categories of Party service that disqualify one from holding office today? What does this mean in practice? Propose something concrete! The problem is not in the slogan but in the rhetoric. It is all demagogy that has aroused popular expectations — a belief that everything can be great in Poland if only we get rid of the bad guys and give somebody a whipping.

Paradowska: But people still have this feeling that nothing is changing, except that there's more and more chaos.

Michnik: I am not saying that everyone in Poland was happy until the Kaczynski brothers (Center Alliance leaders) came along, luring Walesa and screwing things up. On the contrary, the situation was extraordinarily difficult. Everything seems to break down in these kinds of transformations. People feel lost and can be deceived. And they were deceived. The Center Alliance is primarily responsible for the destruction of a stable political order in Poland, although they were not the most aggressive. Even worse were the Catholic Union people. But the point is that the latter would have been marginal if their style of thinking and their reaction to the crisis had not found support from the Center Alliance.

Paradowska: You keep talking about a stable order based on some kind of consensus for economic reform. Yet we have seen what Tyminski did in the presidential elections. There was no consensus.

Michnik: Tyminski was the bastard offspring of the campaign begun by the Center Alliance.

Paradowska: Now you are going too far.

Michnik: Tyminski used the same rhetoric in his attack on the government. The Center first spoke of a shortcut. Tyminski came along and said there is a route even shorter, making a mockery of the whole call for "acceleration."

Paradowska: Tyminski also attracted a growing number of people wanting "neither Solidarity nor the Communists."

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Michnik: I stick to the view that those who voted for Tyminski were voting for a miracle. To believe in a miracle you have first to believe that there is a shortcut. Today Tyminski is running with slogans typical of the early phases of fascist movements. That is where social frustration is likely to go in the future. But, before the presidential campaign, this tendency would not have been around or it would have been marginal. For many years I was marginal. My entire political experience, in KOR, Solidarity, and in the underground, was based on the belief that we had right on our side, even if not a majority. And so I believed that when elections came people would support our views, despite the fact that today those views are even more marginalized than in the past. Again, I am not saying there was a conspiracy. Still, we all understand social and political dynamics during major transformations. If the Democratic Union [the party to which Michnik is closest] were to speak about the present government the way the Center Alliance spoke about the Mazowiecki government, it could also channel frustrations and win over a certain type of people. But it will not do that. It would rather lose, understanding that there is a higher interest at stake here, the good of the state. The Democratic Union's position towards the Bielecki government is ambivalent: it disapproves of many of its policies, but rejects a frontal assault and will not resort to the kind of language that the Center Alliance uses.

Paradowska: Let us look at your own example. You have not joined the Democratic Union. As a journalist you do not speak out about domestic affairs. It seems that, lately, one hears your voice only in parliament. You seem to be someone full of doubts, uncertain about how to proceed.

Michnik: What bothers me is not doubt but fear. I have just heard about a pilgrimage of local governors to Czestochowa. This is something that should alarm everyone who thinks of the Church as a religious institution. I always considered it shameful, in the old days, when a practicing Catholic could not become a governor. But I find it enormously disquieting that high state officials, in their role as officials, are making pilgrimages to Czestochowa. Somewhere the boundary between the sacred and the profane has been crossed. I become suspicious when I read the latest news about the President and his circle. On the other hand, I want to preserve as much good will as possible, and I readily admit that this good will leaves me paralyzed. I am constantly torn between the intellectual in me who should write the truth and the political actor who should know how to make compromises and be guided by a higher interest. That is why I am not writing what I should be writing.

Paradowska: Why are you not active in the Democratic Union?

Michnik: I feel closest to that tendency but, as the editor of a newspaper I feel I should remain nonaligned. Besides, what united the various elements of the Democratic Union was their support of the Mazowiecki government policy of

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compromise and reconciliation. Without that government, the divisions will grow more intense. They will be increasingly divided over Balcerowicz's policies and their social consequences, or about the proper relation between Church and state. It is important to take a stand on these issues, because in elections concerning the nature of the Polish state the voter will want to know what he is voting for. Is he voting for a state that recognizes the rights of those with other views? Is he voting for imprisoning women who have abortions and the doctors who perform them, or against such policy? Is he supporting a parliamentary republic or a presidential system? So far the Democratic Union includes those with differing views on such questions. Nevertheless, I still consider it a coalition of enlightened, democratic, and responsible elements.

Paradowska: And also a pretty ineffective one.

Michnik: It so happens that a political organization systematically eschewing lies and empty promises appears to be ineffective, at least at certain times. I prefer to be on the side of this ineffectiveness.

Paradowska: You make such a simplistic distinction: us, the good and the noble, versus them, the bad ones who lie. Your praise of ineffectiveness is also unconvincing. Politics is the art of getting things done.

Michnik: But while respecting the democratic rules of the game, and not at any price.

Paradowska: You say that the division between Right and Left is artificial. Recently Zbigniew Bujak changed his mind on that and stated that there seems to be some kind of natural law pushing a political system in two different directions, social democracy and Christian democracy.

Michnik: This is playing with words. Look at those who are supposed to be leftists today from the perspective of the prewar Left. At that time the Left was in favor of socialism, a planned economy, socialization of the means of production. Now we call for reprivatization and a market economy. The term "left-wing" is like putty. The same is true for "right-wing." Do the West European Christian Democratic parties call for less state intervention on social welfare than our "leftist" Bujak? This is all a masquerade. Overnight the communists became social democrats and the Center Alliance became Christian Democrats. I have been listening to Center leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski for years and I would never suspect him of being a Christian Democrat. Maybe in politics one must make such miraculous transformations, but if that is the case I just prefer to remain Adam Michnik. If one group can include Kuron, Frasyniuk, Hall, and Syryjczyk, while the other unites former PAX activists with Solidarity self-management types, let us not talk nonsense about Left and Right. It is all a game.

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Paradowska: But a pretty serious game, with 561 seats in the next parliament at stake.

Michnik: I see a different kind of division, based on sensibilities and styles of struggle. There are those who are more radical and those who are more conservative, those who prefer to live in security and those who prefer risk, those who seek what Popper calls the "open society" and those who prefer a closed society. These divisions seem to me more meaningful.

Paradowska: What about divisions according to group interests and goals?

Michnik: Yes, there are the particular interests of farmers or of the large industrial proletariat or of the emerging middle class. Various forces will try to appeal to these interests in various ways. Then there will be divisions based on traditions, on political culture, as well as on the struggle that now awaits us: over the shape of the state. Should it be secular or confessional, parliamentary or presidential? Some people say there is no danger of a religious state since no one is calling for bishops to be ministers or priests senators. That is ridiculous. Within the present Polish context a religious state would be one in which public life would be *de facto* subordinated to Catholic doctrine and Church institutions. What does it matter that a director of a school will proclaim his independence if in fact religious teachers play the roles in setting the curriculum? On the other hand, as a reaction to this kind of instrumentalization of the Church we may see an equally aggressive, obscurantist anti-clericalism, expressing collective frustration by attacking the Church as a constituent part of the establishment. We will also see real divisions when we have to decide the future of difficult economic reforms. So far no one has proposed any other way. But reforms can be carried out in two ways: either through an agreement among the main political blocs or by force. There is no other way. I still consider an agreement possible, though in reality there does not seem to be much political support for one at present. Still, the situation keeps changing. There is Tyminski's Party X, a black hole about which we know nothing, but whose language is frightening. Maybe this will temper the earlier aggressiveness of the Center Alliance.

Paradowska: Are you thinking about a Democratic Union/Center Alliance coalition?

Michnik: The Center's activists are not the heroes of my novel, but they are a force that must be reckoned with. If a pro-pact tendency emerges in both parties I cannot reject it just because of aesthetic revulsion. I would support it for the good of the state. I doubt whether in such an alliance there would be a place for me, but that is not important. What is important is to construct a mechanism that will support the democratic transition in Poland. Is is possible? As we have seen, at certain moments, despite all obstacles, compromise is possible.

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Jacek Tarkowski: In Memoriam

The new Poland has lost one of its most vigorous voices — a voice that was increasingly heard not only in his native land but also in the international scholarly community. Jacek Tarkowski died of a heart attack on November 3, 1991, at the peak of his powers, at the age of 53. A member of the Polish Institute of Sociology, he was a visiting fellow at Oxford and at the Woodrow Wilson Center, a visiting professor in Norway, India and the US, and had lectured at more than forty universities around the world. A few of his shorter socio-political studies have recently been translated into English, some of them in the pages of *Telos*, but the bulk of Tarkowski's work remains unknown outside Poland. The obituaries that have appeared in Poland by numerous friends and colleagues, students and political leaders have attested to the boldness and originality of Tarkowski's analyses, which no doubt would enrich considerably the Western understanding of social and political processes in the East.

Jacek Tarkowski was born on December 28, 1938 in Warsaw, where he spent most of his life. He grew up and matured during a time of great hope and even greater frustration, of promises that were never kept and of despair that grew deeper with each passing year. Sociology was always a suspect discipline to the state monopoly of truth. His choice of career thus put him on a collision course which he took in stride. At a time when the upper reaches of Polish political structures were inaccessible to research, he focused not on the anatomy but on the morphology of "totalitarianism." His studies of local government and the power structure at the "bottom level" of Polish society were nonetheless anything but familiar "community government" research. They served rather as a microscope through which the capillary circulation of political command and the systemic reproduction at the cellular level could be observed and recorded. He focused on informal structures which were concealed and suppressed but by no means annihilated by the official charts of the power structure. He then turned his attention to the intricate web of patronage and clientelism which demonstrated that the "second economy" served as an antidote to problems endemic to the system.

When the crisis finally arrived, Jacek Tarkowski was well prepared for the role he assumed as one of the chief publicists and social analysts of the gathering political strength and self-confidence of the Solidarity movement. He fast became one of the major sociological voices of the underground press (under the pen name Michal Ankwicz). After the fall of the Communist regime he became one of the most balanced, sober and clear-sighted recorders of the disillusions, inhibitions, recriminations and frustrations that followed the brief but exhilarating time of national unity. He will be missed by all who heard his voice.

— Zygmunt Bauman

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Social Disintegration in Poland: Civil Society or Amoral Familism?

Elzbieta Tarkowska and Jacek Tarkowski

Polish society is divided into "the world of people" and "the world of institutions."[1] Throughout the 1970s, there was an intense concern with family, friends and small social circles, in contrast to a marked apathy towards public life.[2] The politicization of 1980-81 meant a revitalization of the public sphere and the emergence of politics as an alternative. But with the introduction of martial law in December 1981, private life reemerged supreme. Small groups characterized by informal ties seemed to be the place within which one's influence could be felt. By 1989, a completely "private society" had emerged.[3]

1. See Stefan Nowak, "Wartośći i postawy spoeczne" ("Social Values and Attitudes"), in Stefan Nowak, ed., *Systemy wartoûci a wzory konsumpcji spoleczelstwa polskiego (Value Systems and Consumption Patterns of Polish Society)* (Warsaw: Uniwersity of Warsaw Press, 1980) and Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, "Dimorphism of Values and Social Schizophrenia, A Tentative Description," in *Sisyphus. Social Studies*, Vol. III, "Crises and Conflicts. The Case of Poland 1980-81."

2. Similar social patterns have been noticed in other socialist countries. A former *New York Times* Moscow correspondent described the USSR in terms of "social schizophrenia" (Hendrick Smith, *The Russians* [New York: Ballantine Books, 1976]); Zdenek Mlynar wrote about a "schizophrenic split of life" under Stalin (*Nachfrost* [Köln: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1978]); Elmer Hankiss writes of a double or split consciousness (*The "Second Society." Is There a Second Social Paradigm Working in Contemporary Hungary?* [Budapest: Institute of Sociology Research Reports, 1986]); Yuri Glasov writes about behavioral bilingualism (*The Russian Mind since Stalin's Death* [Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1985], pp. 90-114) and Milan Simecka about living the lie (*The Restoration of Order. The Normalization of Czechoslovakia* [London: Verso, 1984]).

3. Grazyna Gaesicka *et al.*, "Szanse i warunki ugody spôecznej" ("Chances and Conditions of Social Consensus"), in *VII Ogòlnopolski Zjazd Socjologiczny. Materialy (VII All-Polish Sociological Congress. Materials)*, ed. by Edmund Wnuk-Lipinski (Warsaw: Polskie Towarzystwo Socjologiczne, 1987), pp. 664-65. This state of affairs is corroborated by public opinion research. Stanislaw Kwiatkowski, Head of the Center of Social Opinion Studies said: "There is another type of threat in society. It is no more a rebellion, apathy, but privation in the name of the slogan 'let everybody do his best to save himself.' Ever greater numbers, especially of energetic young people, shrink from common actions and decide to work on their own seeking to shape their future outside the community" (*Rado Naradowa*, Special Edition No. 2 [April 16, 1987]). A similar point was made by Mira Marody: ". . . the enterprise of Polish society consists in the resourcefulness of individuals and groups. . . . This resourcefulness is above all directed

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The key group of this "private society" is not, as in the West, the nuclear family. Rather, it is "small groups" or "microstructures," which include the family as well as friends, fellow workers, and neighbors. Under martial law these private, direct ties constituted an alternative public sphere. With the boycott of public life, this alternative sphere generated social integration. It served as a buffer against the economic crisis Poland confronted during the 1980s. Unlike Western societies characterized by individual and familial atomism, Poland developed an atomism and egoism of small groups.[4]

What is usually emphasized is the integrative character of small groups: "Strong emotional ties within small groups constitute one of the most significant foundations for the endurance of Polish society."[5] The uglier side of this development is usually ignored. For example, internal ties frequently degenerate because of the rivalry of consumers caused by economic shortages. Microstructures tend to compete with other microstructures, thus creating aggression, social pathology and all the features of an "unfriendly society." For individuals, this competition between microstructures leads to a world divided between "family members" and "strangers."

This division between family members and strangers leads to an ethical dualism. "Some moral principles are accepted as binding only with regard to individuals or groups nearest to a particular person, while the opposite behavior towards strangers passes as being moral or positive."[6] Although this ethical dualism has become normal, it is not the only anomic aspect, for the limitation of social space to family members is followed by a limitation of social time to the present. Thus, planning is ignored, resulting in considerable carelessness.

These characteristics of Polish society are very similar to what Banfield calls "amoral familism" — a term used to describe a traditional, Italian peasant community.[7] Polish microstructures also resemble the "modified extended family" typical of industrial societies and best described by Litwak: "Its members exchange significant services with each other, thus differing from the isolated

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to changing individual or group situations within the economic system rather than to changing the system. Its general motto is: defend your own and take what you can from what there is" ("Miedzy wspôlprace a odrzuceniem") ("Between Collaboration and Rejection"), *Polityka*, No. 28 (July 11, 1987).

4. See Adam Podgorecki's description of a "tendency to become secluded in basic elementary groups" (Adam Podgorecki, "Coûciowa analiza spôleczenstwa polskiego" ["Global Analysis of Polish Society"]), in Wnuk-Lipiński, ed., *op. cit.*

5. Jadwiga Koralewicz and Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, "Zycie rodzinne, towarzyskie i publiczne. Wartości i deprywacje" ("Family, Social and Public Life. Values and Deprivations"), in *Nierówności i upośledzenia w świadomoûci społecznej* (*Inequities and Underprivileges in Social Consciousness*), Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński, ed. (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 1987), p. 209.

6. Kazimierz Dobrolowski, *Studia z pogranicza historii i socjologii* (*Studies on the Borderline of History and Sociology*) (Breaslau: Ossolineum, 1967), p. 58.

7. Edward C. Banfield, "The Moral Basis of a Backward Society," in *Political Corruption. Readings in Comparative Analysis*, ed. by Arnold J. Heidenheimer (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1979), pp. 129-37.

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nuclear family. . . . [But nuclear families] retain considerable autonomy, therefore differing from the classical extended family. . . . The nuclear families are housed independently but remain active in situations where extended family aid is given."[8] In Litwak's scenario, networks of informal ties go beyond the immediate family and thus become the source of "amoral familism."

Banfield stressed economic backwardness as a precondition for "amoral familism." In Poland, economic shortages were a major determinant in forming a second economy of small groups exhibiting mutual distrust and hostility — something common to any culture of poverty.[9] This is compounded by the residues of Poland's peasant tradition and mentality which stress the limited world of friends and family.[10] Furthermore, there is the gentry tradition based on exuberant individualism and egoism as well as Catholic traditionalism. Still other social forces lay behind these features of Polish history.

Socialism is characterized by a scarcity of goods which encourages the development of special private mechanisms to satisfy needs in spite of scant resources. In attempting to outwit the system the Poles have developed strategies similar to those of peasants. According to Foster, "peasants view their social, economic and natural universe . . . as one in which all of the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love, manliness and honor, respect and status, power and influence, security and safety, exist in *finite quality and are always in short supply*. Not only do . . . all . . . 'good things' exist in finite and limited quantities, . . . *there is no way directly within peasant power to increase the available quantities*."[11] This leads to a war of all against all, and any improvements for one group's conditions are resented by other groups.

The Polish Communist government encouraged this attitude by disseminating the values of an egalitarian socialism. Such watchwords as "we all have the same stomachs" and calls against the "unjustly and excessively rich" deeply penetrated public consciousness, now haunted by a paranoia about unjust distribution and "disinterested envy."[12] Anyone out of the average becomes

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8. Edward Litwak, "Extended Kin Relations in Industrial Democratic Societies," in *Social Structures and the Family*, ed. by Ethel Shanas and George F. Streib (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1965), p. 291.

9. The general culture of poverty is discussed by Piotr Gliński, *Ekonomiczne uwarunkowania stylu Życia. Rodziny miejskie w Polsce w latach siedemdziesiątych* (*Economic Conditionings of the Life Style. Urban Families in Poland in the 1970s*), typescript, 1983.

10. Adam Podgòrecki, *op. cit.*, p. 589 and Ludwik Stomma, *Anthropologia kultury wsi polskiej XIX w.* (*Cultural Anthropology of the 19th Century Polish Village*) (Warsaw: IW PAX, 1986).

11. George M. Foster, "Peasant Society and the Image of Limited Good," in Jack M. Potter, May N. Diaz and George M. Foster, eds. *Peasant Society. A Reader* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), p. 304.

12. "Disinterested envy" is by no means a Polish speciality. There are many examples of this phenomenon. This is how Eva and Richard Blum describe a Greek village: ". . . when good things happen to a villager, the other villagers express their envy in gossip, criticism and calumny. The villagers describe their life altogether as an uneasy one, with each family feeling competitive and jealous toward any other that might

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suspect and even hated. This apprehensive worldview was compounded by the ethic and policies of a paternalistic welfare state.

The welfare states which emerged in socialist countries after Stalin's death were based on an unwritten social contract which traded submission to the state for patrimonial protection and social security.[13] The state protected citizens from competition by providing full employment, health services, and free education, even if at low quality. The result was low productivity, a decline of the work ethic, low morale, and a general ethos summed up in the popular saying, "We pretend to work; they pretend to pay us." In general terms, a redistributive orientation replaced a productive one. Pawlik associated this shift in orientation to the mores of local communities: "In popular consciousness, wealth is almost invariably associated with dishonesty or at least with personal shrewdness, sometimes with good luck or destiny . . . but rarely with solid, sustained effort in work, especially within the framework of a socialized economy."[14]

The work ethic declined because it was more rational to resort to "connections" with state officials. Individuals and groups remain tied to the state — thus blocking autonomous initiative — because the state, as the great redistributor, remained the only source of wealth. This led to a kind of competitive socialism in which individuals and groups competed for state goods. The state, in essence, mediatized individual and group competition.[15] As a result, the state could not avoid a generalized resentment concerning its policies, while anyone better off ended up being despised. There emerged what Narojek describes as "envy of those whose needs are better satisfied in the mechanism of social life."[16]

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achieve success or happiness" (*Health and Healing in Rural Greece* [Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1965], p. 118). One member of the Mexican family described by Oscar Lewis also displays disinterested envy and concludes: "Instead of trying to encourage one another, our motto is: 'If you are nothing yourself let the other person feel even worse.' Yes, among us you always have to feel you are better" (*Sanchez i jego dzieci* [*Sanchez and His Children*] (Warsaw: PIW, 1964), p. 485.

13. Ferenc Feher, "Paternalism as a Mode of Legitimation in Soviet-type Societies," in T.H. Rigby and Ferenc Feher, eds., *Political Legitimation in Communist States* (London: The Macmillan Press, 1982), p. 66.

14. Wojciech Pawlik, *Gospodarka lokalna w perspektywie Zycia codziennego* (*Local Economy in the Perspective of Everyday Life*), 1985, manuscript, p. 28. What is striking here is the similarity with the Italian peasantry: "He has lost confidence in himself, as well as trust in the government and in members of his own group. He firmly believes that the few who have succeeded in making careers were able to do so for some mysterious reason: one hit upon a hidden treasure; another was lucky enough to win in the lottery; another was called to America by a successful uncle" (F. G. Friedman, "The World of 'La Miseria'," in *Peasant Society*, *op. cit.*, p. 329). Cf. also Mira Marody, "Antynomie spôecznej ûwiadomoûci" ("Antinomies of Social Consciousness"), *Odra*, No. 1 (1987).

15. Wlodzimierz Wesotowski, *Klasy, warstwy i wladza* (*Classes, Strata and Power*) (Warsaw: PWN, 1966), p. 193; Winicjusz Narojek, *Struktura spoleczna w doświadczeniu jednostki. Studium z socjologii współczesnego społeczenstwa polskiego* (*Social Structure in Individual Experience. A Study in the Sociology of Contemporary Polish Society*) (Warsaw: PIW, 1982), pp. 168-71.

16. Narojek, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

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This hatred towards the wealthy reflected the general feeling that one is not in control of one's destiny. Such a feeling of impotence is related to the constant sense of crisis and unpredictability in social life — something similar to Foster's peasants' sense of dependence and subordination. This attitude is also connected to the centralized and undemocratic logic of the political and economic system, which contributes to the contraction of social space, and is intensified by ambiguities concerning what constitutes state property. This so-called "property" is defined in terms of socialism, which denies the existence of property as such. What results is an odd belief that property is somehow *not* property. This enhances a feeling of alienation, for what is social is seen as belonging to no one. Moral relativism is the ultimate outcome.

This peculiar social situation in Poland is the result of cultural as well as economic factors: "never before in Poland and maybe never . . . in Europe has migration from the countryside to the towns achieved such dimension over such a short time."[17] Peasant culture has thus been grafted onto the cities. Wasilewski has pointed to the uglier side of Polish peasant culture: "The habit of accumulating goods (a struggle for things) resulting from peasant misery and uncertainty, when 'to have' meant 'to exist,' has survived and become consolidated, and along with representatives of this class it has spread over all of society."[18] Bauman points out that, "uncertainty [is] the dominant feature of preindustrial peasant life; it remains a paramount characteristic in the Communist society emerging in the wake of the peasant one."[19] Peasants transfer feelings of awe and uncertainty towards nature to the social structure of Communist society. Ultimately, these features strengthen amoral familism and an ethic of survivalism.

Banfield found that in general peasants distrust those who hold state power — a finding confirmed by Jowitt's study of Rumanian peasants.[21] As for Poland, the distrust of the state and other official institutions can be traced back to when Poland was partitioned by foreign powers. For over 150 years all Polish offices, courts of law and the army were occupied by foreigners. This distrust was reinforced by the German occupation of Poland during WWII, when patriotism was equated with anti-Nazi resistance. Poles retained these attitudes after the war, and thus socialist institutions, like all other institutions

17. Kazimierz Piesowicz, "Social and Demographic Consequences of World War II and the German Occupation in Poland," *Oeconomica Polona*, No. 1 (1983), p. 82.

18. Jacek Wasilewski, "Spoleczeństwo polskie, spoleczeństwo chlopskie" ("Polish Society, Peasant Society"), *Studia Socjologiczne*, No. 1 (1986), p. 52.

19. Zygmunt Bauman, "Comment on Eastern Europe," in *Studies in Comparative Communism*, Vol. XII, No. 2-3 (1979), p. 185.

21. Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-136. Cf. also Kenneth Jowitt, "An Organizational approach to the Study of Political Culture in Marxist-Leninist Systems," in *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 68, No. 3 (1974), pp. 1171-1191. Cf. also Steven L. Sampson, "Society without the State in Rumania The Rise of Public Man," Conference on "After the Fall: Post-Ceaucescu Rumania at the End of the 20th Century," University of Nebraska, duplicated text.

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up to that time, came to be seen as inherently foreign and unfriendly.

This distrust of public institutions should not be seen merely as a peculiarity of Polish history. Rather, it is part of a whole *belief system*: it betrays a preference for the informal over the formal and for horizontal ties over vertical client-patron relations.[22] The question is whether this attitude is an immediate response to particular problems or a more deeply rooted attitude. Interestingly, confronted with a rapidly changing society Irish policemen in Chicago were found to share a belief system similar to that of the Polish. As Terry Clark wrote, "The most striking fact about the Irish Catholic command officers is the extent to which they rely on personal loyalties and the exchange of personal favors as a way of doing things. If there is a perfectly legal, routine way of doing something, you can almost be certain that many of your Irish Catholic officers will prefer to do it through some informal means instead. They deliberately step outside the formal system to do things informally: they seem to feel more comfortable working through 'contacts,' intermediaries, and friends."[23] This response indicates a general distrust of statist, official institutions — something which seems to have become a permanent fixture of Polish political culture.

This Polish ethics has a religious component. As Clark also shows, religious groups of German and English origin "have a much greater and more obvious commitment to some set of rules, standards, or general principles as a way of doing things."[24] This abstract ethics, based on principles and rules, is different from what Glen C. Dealy has called a "Catholic ethic." Characteristic of this Catholic ethic is the privileging of leadership, concerns with power and for excellence in all endeavors.[25] Whereas in the Protestant world personal standing is based on one's accumulated capital, in Catholic ethics personal standing is based on networks of friends. Family and friends, not abstract rules and principles, dominate the Catholic ethic.

The Catholic ethic is tied to a value dualism. The Catholic worldview separates the private from the public and the values appropriate to both spheres. The public sphere is seen as uncertain and dangerous — something not shared by Protestants. There is also a split in the outlook towards time, for everyday life and religiousity is not as important as holidays and mass. The

22. Jacek Tarkowski, "Poland Patrons and Clients in a Planned Economy," in S. N. Eisenstadt and René Lemarchand, eds., *Political Clientilism, Patronage and Development* (London and Beverly Hills CA: Sage, 1981); and Jacek Tarkowski, "Patronage in a Centralized, Socialist System: The Case of Poland," in *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 4, 1983.

23. Terry N. Clark, "The Irish Ethic and the Spirit of Patronage," in *Ethnicity*, Vol. 2, 1975, p. 322.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Glen C. Dealy, *The Public Man*, *op. cit.* The "Catholic ethic" presented by Dealy has many features in common with the chivalrous ethos reconstructed by Maria Ossowska in *Ethos rycerski i jego odmiany* (*Chivalrous Ethos and its Variations*), (Warsaw: PN, 1973).

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Protestant ethic is more future-oriented while the Catholic ethic emphasizes the present. For Catholics, work, which is always fueled by a belief in the need to plan for the future, is not as important as recreation; consumption and use are more important than accumulation.

This approach to Poland differs from recent ones attempting to understand it in terms of "social movements" and "civil society." Rather, the focus has been on factors which have impeded and frustrated such developments. Today an understanding of Poland must take into account the culture and social mores which have emerged in recent Polish history. Tradition, culture, religion, economic factors, and history in general seem to constitute a definite "amoral familism." Until it becomes possible to go beyond this — no small task — the vibrant public life which civil society and social movement analysts have projected will remain a mere abstraction floating above the reality of a political culture of apathy and resignation.

On Polish Political Attitudes

Mira Marody

It is already difficult to remember that the radical rejection of socialism in Poland occurred only in the late 1980s.[1] In recent Polish history, the years 1980 and 1981 are associated with the birth of the Solidarity movement. But it was also a time when Poland first experienced a traumatic fall in the standard of living. Economic stagnation had begun earlier, but the ruthless decline took place within less than two years. Its most visible manifestations appeared within a few months and affected everyone. Empty shops and growing queues

1. The persistence of favorable attitudes towards socialism as a set of principles defining the social system was particularly surprising in the case of the youngest generation that had not experienced any strong indoctrination. In 1987 a CBOS survey asked a number of young people if socialism was still a valid project. 58% of the respondents answered in the affirmative, whereas only 28.9% responded negatively. Two years later the distribution of answers to the same question was exactly the opposite: 28.8% answering yes and 60.4% no. There was also a radical change in the assessment of the past. In 1987, 69.9% of youth thought that socialism brought more benefits or at least as many benefits as disadvantages while 23.3% were of the opposite opinion. In April 1989 the first two opinions were accepted by only 39.7% of the respondents while those stressing disadvantages amounted to 55%. Cf. CBOS, *Miodziez '89* (*The Youth '89*), survey report, (Warsaw: 1989).

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hurt even people who were comparatively well off. This drop in the standard of living was accompanied by a breakdown of the social order. Everyday life was marked not only by shortages and scrambling for goods but also by general chaos and unpredictability. In many peoples' eyes the growing social disintegration justified the introduction of martial law.[2]

For the first few years following December 1981 most Poles still believed that the economic situation was temporary and unrelated to the basic principles on which the social system was built. During this time people sought to protect their own standards of living while biding their time through the crisis. Thus, it was typical to go outside the system and take adventage of whatever devices could replace inefficient state institutions. Two ways of coping with the crisis emerged. The first can be called *forced traditionalism* — an attempt to fulfill modern aspirations by traditional means. It was characterized by self-reliance in satisfying material needs, by the growing importance of small, informal groups — family, friends, social circles — and by the postponing of the fulfillment of broader aspirations of the adult population by projecting them onto children.[3] The second pattern could be called *parasitic innovation* — efforts to exploit the new opportunities which economic reforms opened for private enterprise. Most of these innovative activities, however, were limited to self-aggrandizement by capitalizing on the absurdities of the communist economy.

By the late 1980s it became obvious that it was impossible to wait out the crisis. Money was eaten by inflation, the search for essential goods took too much time, and the disorganization of institutions was disturbing family life. Most important, the impossibility of defining future prospects caused anxiety and frustration. There was a feeling of falling behind, notwithstanding the intensification of efforts to keep up. The "second society" which had been constructed in order to cope with the crisis was not creating its own instututions independently of the system. People sought to change their own position within the system rather than to change the system itself. Individual improvements were taking place not by implementing new norms of social life but by dismantling or bypassing existing standards. Thus the system lost its ability to coordinate individual activities.

Rationality on the macro level was checkmated by an altogether different

2. Two years after the imposition of martial law, 55% of the respondents accepted this move as valid. Cf. Wladislaw Adamski, Krzysztof Jasiewicz, Andrje Rychard eds., *Polacy '84. Dynamika konfliktu i konsensusu* (*Poles '84. Dynamics of Conflict and Consensus*), (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 1986). In another survey the opinion that "martial law introduced peace and order" was accepted by 41% of the respondents. Cf. Edward Wnuk-Lipiński, ed., *Nierownosci i uposledzenia w swiadomosci spolecznej* (*Inequalities and Discriminations in Public Opinion*), (Warsaw: IFiS PAN, 1987).

3. For a more detailed description of this pattern, see Mira Marody, "Collective Sense and Social Order," in Jadwiga Koralewicz, Ireneusz Bialecki, M. Watson, eds., *Crisis and Transition. Polish Society of 1980s* (Berg Publishers, 1987).

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rationality on the micro level.[4] Thus norms essential for the functioning of the whole system became blurred. Social reality was becoming increasingly indeterminate, i.e., it ceased to be a domain of shared meanings and rules of behavior. Local "ethics" valid only for a given group in a particular place began to appear. Although in the short run and in particular contexts these local ethics increased the individuals' chances to improve their conditions, eventually they undermined the reproduction of the existing social order thus precipitating a general disintegration.

Martial law did not halt social disintegration, though its impact on social consciousness was crucial. On the one hand, the decline in the standard of living could not be explained; on the other, affluent groups emerging outside the system became increasingly visible, showing that it was possible to embark on a successful financial career in Poland and also demostrating the existence of a rationality distinct from that of the existing system. This led to the rejection not only of "real socialism" but of socialism as a set of principles defining the social system.[5]

This rejection of socialism became all too obvious during the June 1989 elections. Afterwards, the Mazowiecki government began to introduce new rules and institutions meant to usher in a market economy and a democratic political system. Yet despite institutional discontinuities, for many people the political scene seemed to remain very much the same, characterized by a ruling party (or an institutional Solidarity) perceived as the nation's leading force, on the one side, and the unengaged society, on the other. Solidarity was assumed to represent the interests of society-at-large. The confidence and support for the reforming government's endeavors was based primarily on confidence in the people in charge — in particular, Mazowiecki — and not on clearly articulated political interests. Political choices remained weakly linked with group interests.[6]

Solidarity supporters practically held their breath waiting for an announcement by vice-premier Balcerowicz on TV that the transition to the market economy had been accomplished and things could go back to normal — only this

4. Cf. Mira Marody, "Antinomies of Collective Subconsciousness," *Social Research*, 1988, Nos. 1-2.

5. This change can be illustrated by a radical shift in attitudes concerning several key issues. By the late 1980s there was almost total opposition to the state monopoly in the economy. Views advocating a non-egalitarian division of goods, pluralism of world-views, polycentric models of political power, etc. also became increasingly popular. Cf. H. Banaszak, *Political Attitudes of the Young Generation*, manuscript. The belief that the state should lower its expenditure for social welfare also became widespread. Cf. Lena Kolarska-Bobinska, "Poczucie Niesprawiedliwosci, Konfliktu i Preferowany Lad w Gospodarce" ("The Sense of Injustice, Conflict, and Preferred Economic Order), in *Polacy '88. Dynamika konfliktu a Szanse reform* (*Poles '88. The Dynamics of Conflict and Chances for Reform*), (Warsaw: 1989).

6. For a more detailed discussion of this, see Mira Marody, "New Possibilities and Old Habits," in E. Adamski, Edward Wnuk-Lipiński, eds., *Socialism and Beyond*, in press.

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time with plenty of goods, efficient workplaces and smiling employees. Former *nomenklatura* functionaries would be replaced by those worthy of the people's trust. In this context, accepting market mechanisms seemed to be a clear moral choice and not a matter of compliance with rational rules. This attitude delegated full responsibility for reforms to the authorities while absolving everyone else from making personal decisions about the future.

The transformation of Poland's social system after June 1989 had at least one trait in common with the restructuring initiated 45 years earlier by the communists: it was an *administrative* change of social institutions. Thus both reform efforts follow a logic different from that of everyday life — the realm Bourdieu refers to as *habitus*.[7] This is the system of unconscious patterns of thoughts, perceptions, and dispositions which mediate between social structure and individual practices. It is what accounts for the continuity and proper working of the social world.

One of the major features of Poland's *habitus* has been a belief that politics is a sphere of life dominated by authorities whose decisions can be challenged but never influenced through participation.[8] This belief has remained unchanged despite deep institutional changes. It helps explain the political attitudes of 1990 which were amazingly similar to those during communist rule. Solidarity authorities replaced communist authorities, but politics remained equated with those in power, whose task was to build a better life for everyone. In both cases the surrender of responsibility to administrators made "trust vs. lack of trust" the main political issue, while allegiance to particular leaders became the fundamental determinant of political options. In both cases a loss of faith in the administration made civil disobedience the only possible political reaction.

The resilience of these habitual attitudes demonstrates that the introduction of democratic rules and institutions is a *necessary* but not *sufficient* condition for the so-called democratization of political life. To behave in a democratic way individuals have to be able to define their interests. They have to accept formal and legal procedures which permit the democratic negotiation of these interests as the best way to achieve their individual or group goals. Finally, politics has to be perceived as a tool for establishing the ends and means of social development. These conditions do not obtain in Polish society which, if anything, has developed characteristics inimical to these conditions.

The blurring of the social structure has not eliminated social differences but has stressed the distinctiveness of small, informal groups while ignoring the common characteristics of their social position and interests. The general division

7. Cf. Pierre Bourdieu, "General Reproduction and Social Reproduction," in R. Brown, ed., *Knowledge, Education and Cultural Change* (London: 1973) pp. 71-112, also Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (Cambridge: 1977).

8. Cf. Mira Marody, "Perception of Politics and Political Participation," in *Social Research*, 1990, No. 2.

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into "Us vs. Them" swallowed all other forms of social identity and promoted a negative social solidarity. Poles found it easier to integrate and unite *against* rather than *for* something. The fundamental category around which yearning for positive unity can be satisfied will most likely be the nation.

According to the results of a study by Jasinska-Kania,[9] the acceptance of formal, legal procedures, which are the necessary conditions for any democratic order, does not seem to be a high priority in Poland. This study found that the evaluation of the legitimacy of the political order was based on the more general types of moral considerations specified by Kohlberg.[10] According to Kohlberg, a "law and order" orientation dominates the American adult population, especially those with higher education. In Polish society the dominant type of moral reasoning is the "orientation toward consensus and interpersonal harmony," while the "law and order" orientation has been chosen by a surprisingly low percentage of respondants (from zero to 16% and most often by women with only a primary education). This means that faith and trust in leaders rather than procedural aspects of their decisions and actions will legitimate the political order. Such an orientation threatens to breed authoritarianism as a fundamental component of political attitudes.

The perception of politics in Poland is also different from how politics is seen in democratic societies. Because of the legacy of Communism, where politics was the exclusive domain of authorities, in Poland the average citizen has stopped being interested in how social goods are *produced*. Politics has come to be viewed as a tool for the just *distribution* of these goods. This means that politics will be equated with pressing one's demands and not searching for solutions to urgent social problems. Add to this the anger and frustrations emerging from the current economic system in which some people become rich very fast and in obscure ways, and a reactionary populism may emerge.

A mixture of all these attitudes was clearly discernible in the 1990 presidential elections in Poland. Tyminski's surprising electoral success can best be explained by his appeals to nationalistic xenophobia, his proposed authoritarian solutions of economic problems, and his promises of affluence for everyone. Although completely unrealistic, his promises and proposals fit well-known patterns asserting that society's prosperity depends on its leaders' good will.

These attitudes are likely to increase with growing recession and unemployment. They are firmly anchored in structural characteristics of Polish society and only a change of these characteristics may create conditions under which a new *habitus* may develop. For the process of social change depends not only on the will for change but also or even primarily on attaining through everyday activities the social understanding that new ways of achieving individual and group goals are more effective than the old ones.

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9. Cf. Aleksandra R. Jasinska-Kania, *Osobowosc, Orientacje Moralne i Postawy Polityczne (Personality, Moral Orientation, and Political Attitudes)*, (Warsaw: IS UW, 1988).

10. Cf. L. Kohlberg, *Essays in Moral Development*, Vol. 1 (San Francisco: 1981).

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Notes and Commentary:

Populism and the NEA

Kevin Mattson

Populism seems to leave little room for intellectuals, and the very idea of a "populist intellectual" seems absurd. This is due mostly to old assumptions codified during the 1950s by Richard Hofstadter and others, that populism and intellectualism are incompatible. Emphasizing Senator McCarthy's attacks on intellectuals, contributors to an influential anthology on *The New American Right* made a clear and long-lasting association between anti-intellectualism and populism. As Richard Pells explains: "Influenced by Hofstadter's *The Age of Reform* and a seminal essay by Oscar Handlin published in *Commentary* in 1951 which located the beginnings of American anti-Semitism in the 1890s, Bell, Lipset, Fiedler, and Peter Viereck saw in the demagogic rhetoric and acute anxieties of earlier movements like Populism and Progressivism the seeds of the current McCarthyite aversion to eastern breeding, urban complexity, and elitist credentials."[1]

This characterization ignores the fact that when populism began in the 1880s "intellectuals" or, more appropriately, pamphlet writers and economic analysts, did play a significant role in it. In salvaging American populism from misinterpretations by later intellectuals, Goodwyn points out that the movement had to develop a "culturally unsanctioned level of social analysis . . ." This was accomplished partly by the lecture system organized by the Farmers' Alliance as well as by such individuals as Ignatius Donnelly, a "writer-lecturer, social critic, and part-time politician."[2] In fact, populism only claims that, if intellectualism is overprivileged, life-world experiences are de-emphasized. Thus the question concerning the role of *populist* intellectuals is meaningful.

Over the last three decades the liberal identification of popular opinion with

1. Richard Pells, *The Liberal Mind in a Conservative Age: American Intellectuals in the 1940s and 1950s* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1985), pp. 334-35. Peter Viereck described the "pseudo-conservative" groups which defended McCarthy in this way: "What all these groups are at heart is the same old isolationist, Anglophobe, Germanophile revolt of radical Populist lunatic-fringers against the eastern, educated, Anglicized elite." Peter Viereck, "The Revolt Against the Elite," in *The New American Right*, ed. by Daniel Bell (New York: Criterion Books, 1955), p. 95.

2. Lawrence Goodwyn, *The Populist Moment: A Short History of the Agrarian Revolt in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. xviii, xxi, 105.

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superficiality and manipulation has resulted in a trivialization of political discourse to the point of banality. It is not an accident, therefore, that there is a growing discontent not only with issues of wealth-distribution, but also with the way in which politics is conducted.[3] Public debate *is* superficial, but it does not have to be so. As Dionne has written, issues are constantly framed in terms of a Right-Left dichotomy and thus ignore most people's opinions.[4] Intellectuals concerned with populist politics cannot dismiss popular concerns. As Berman has shown, American Left intellectuals have tended to write off public opinion as either reactionary or manipulated.[5] There is a need to move beyond the deadlock of the cretinized public versus alienated intellectuals without, of course, surrendering critical insight. Iintellectuals may have something to learn from the disenfranchised public.

Consider the issue of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). The cultural politics surrounding it show clearly how a post-modern Left often does battle with a divided Right. Having emerged only in the late 1960s, the post-modern Left has a short history. Whereas the original impetus behind the New Left was a vision of participatory democracy, what emerged after 1968 was something different. Not only did portions of the Left degenerate into a variety of mindless Marxism-Leninisms, but particularism came to displace a general constituency. As Fred Siegel has argued, with the end of the Great Society vision in 1966 American politics took on a a new configuration: ". . . the problem of racism and urban adjustment was compounded by the New Politics alliance between upper-middle-class, often suburban cultural liberals and inner-city blacks. In 1968 the issue was not only the violence but 'radical chic,' the white liberal justifications for it. Liberals penitent for the country's past behavior toward blacks insisted on seeing every sign of white ethnic discontent as a cover for racism, which, although still formidable, was on the decline."[6] This focus on racism and sexism tended to make "consciousness" crucial. This is the kernel of today's "political correctness" which was one of the unintended results of the Left's "long march through the institutions" — especially universities. The post-modern Left is radically relativist since it has given up on "meta-narratives," i.e., any universal claims, now seen as little more than oppressive schemes to dupe the "other" (i.e., blacks and women). At the same time, it persists in criticizing "Western," "white" domination. The stress on consciousness also makes the Left open to the avant-garde project of "decentering" unified "bourgeois" consciousness, seen historically in the efforts of surrealism and dadaism as well as in more contemporary endeavors such as post-modern architecture

3. On wealth distribution, see Kevin Phillips, *The Politics of Rich and Poor* (New York: Random House, 1990.)

4. E. J. Dionne, *Why Americans Hate Politics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

5. Russell Berman, "Intellectuals and the Gulf War in Germany and the United States," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 167-79.

6. Fred Siegel, *Troubled Journey: From Pearl Harbor to Ronald Reagan* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1984), p. 199.

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(with its emphasis on *pastiche* styles combined from various historical periods) and deconstruction. The Left has also come to concentrate on "rights." Consequently, it is almost natural that the artistic "community" considers itself entitled to federal funds. This explains why some sectors of the Left uphold relativism — which denies that there can be standards of judgment for "good" or "bad" art — while demanding federal money for a post-modern avant-garde (i.e., Karen Finley, Robert Mapplethorpe, Holly Hughes, etc.).

The post-modern cultural Left is a far cry from the older cultural Left of the New Deal era. During the 1930s certain Left intellectuals did argue for public aid to artists. Yet this call was not grounded in "rights." At that time there was a clear understanding that "accessibility" mattered, for if art was to be granted public funds it had to have meaning and relevance for the public. As has been pointed out: "Only through accessibility would people come to regard the arts, not an expendable luxury, but as a community asset." This issue of accessibility was not purely formal, for, as WPA organizers saw it, there had to be an institutional backbone for accessibility: "Theatrical production units and symphony orchestras would have to be established in regional centers from which touring companies could be dispatched. Local arts centers would have to be founded to house workshops and traveling exhibits. In short, the arts would have to be freed from a cultural milieu that kept them as 'high culture' — a thing apart — and returned to the healthy channels of everyday life."[7] Local centers of control were the only things that would make popular culture truly popular. The post-modern cultural Left — due to its privileging of an avant-garde and its view of any demand of accessibility as acts of censorship — has lost this original vision of the possibility of populist culture.

Today, this older belief in cultural democracy has been largely taken up by the Right. Politicians and intellectuals associated with the Right have argued that the government should not have taxpayers pay for art that they do not support. The charge by E. L. Doctorow and others that this is an act of censorship equates not funding art with censorship. Here the Right, most prominently represented by Jesse Helms, is on solid ground, especially in comparison to the post-modern Left's position. But this polarity itself begins to break down once one examines carefully the relation between populism and the Right.

Just how populist is Jesse Helms? As Hughes has pointed out, "[Helms'] National Congressional Club remains one of the richest political-action committees in Washington, a direct-mail operation that pulled in $1.4 million in 1989."[8] At

7. Jane De Hart Matthews, "Arts and the People: The New Deal Quest for a Cultural Democracy," in *Journal of American History*, Vol. LXII, No. 2 (1975), pp. 319, 321.

8. Robert Hughes, "Whose Art is It, Anyway?," *Time* (June 4, 1990), p. 46. Ironically, Helms has received support from Philip Morris Co., a key funder of much of the art that Helms himself has attacked (in 1990 Philip Morris Co. gave $15 million to artists, with no qualification). The vice president of Philip Morris Co. has been quoted as saying: "Senator Helms has been very supportive of our business interests." Cf. Mervyn Rothstein, "Uneasy Partners: Arts and Philip Morris," *New York Times* (December 18, 1990), pp. C15, C20. The quote is from p. C15.

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any rate, Helms has never suggested an extension of his goal of public determination of art to other issues. He has used this tax issue not to defend democratic politics but only to legitimate his political ambitions.[9] Thus Helms has turned a political issue into a moral one, i.e., an attack on "family" values, to contain the populist sentiment he has manipulated. An authentic populist would point out the *political* issues — not just the moral ones — at stake, . For instance, the older idea expounded by the cultural Left of the 1930s, that local centers are needed to make art truly popular, needs to be reintroduced. It is necessary to show how art and people's everyday life could somehow be reintegrated. Such a political call for local control could go well beyond the Right's moralistic diatribes. In order to address this institutional dimension, it is necessary to undertake a more stringent analysis of the NEA and its cultural politics.

Since the NEA's creation in 1965, a bureaucratic "arts subgovernment" has developed within the federal government which, by the end of the 1970s, had become so strong that it "was capable of independent action" to such an extent that during the Reagan administration it defeated the president's calls to cut back the NEA.[10] This political conjuncture helps explain why NEA defenders often wind up as abject elitists and apologists for the bureaucracy. In attempting to vindicate the NEA, Robert Brustein, for one, has argued that " 'peers' [on NEA panels] are more likely to understand the intentions of an artist than . . . lay people."[11] Karen Finley, a performance artist who has been funded by the NEA, extends this reasoning: "When some people say that the NEA selection process in itself is censorship, they are wrong. Art is a profession and has experts, as do other areas. . . . When people say the NEA should end altogether and that private business should fund the arts, they are wrong. Big business uses the NEA as a guideline in knowing who to give money to, by knowing who has gone through the distinguished process of the Endowment."[12] Such bland appeals to both the professionalization of art and an alliance between artists and NEA bureaucrats renders defenses of the NEA predicated on romantic visions of artists[13] as the

9. Sidney Blumenthal, "Republican of Fear," *The New Republic* (Nov. 12, 1990).

10. Margaret Jane Wyszomirski, "Congress, Presidents, and the Arts: Collaboration and Struggle," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (September, 1988), pp. 133-34.

11. Robert Brustein, "The Avant-Garde and Shock Art,"in *The New Republic* (Nov. 19, 1990), p. 26.

12. Karen Finley, quoted in Margaret Spillaner "The Culture of Narcissism," in *The Nation* (Dec. 10, 1990), p. 737.

13. Doctorow defends the romantic artist as follows: "the work of independent witness, that often self-destructive willingness to articulate that which many may feel but no one dares to say, the blundering, struggling effort to connect the visible to the invisible, to find the secret meanings of places and things, to release the spirit from the clay — that rude, stubborn, squawking, self-appointed voice singing the unsingable — who we are, what we are becoming — is through all our regions and states and cities and schools and workshops and studios a natural resource as critical to us and our identity and our survival as are our oil, our coal, our timber." This hardly evokes the professionalization

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"other" — the Doctorow defense — utter nonsense. Rather, Finley's elitism reflects a coalition of avant-garde artists and New Class bureaucrats.

The implications of a New Class-Avant-Garde coalition cannot be separated from more general questions about stratification and aesthetic appreciation.[14] This does not mean that certain forms of art correspond with certain classes. Rather, aesthetic appreciation as such often becomes a pompous self-legitimation and a means to discredit those who do not embrace similar cultural tastes. Even NEA defenders are forced to concede that the public which benefits from NEA-funded arts programs "is still overwhelmingly drawn from upper-class and professional groups, with (for instance) blue-collar workers contributing a negligible percentage."[15] Beyond the issue of patronage, recent cultural productions have reflected a pronounced contempt for "Middle America." Thus "Blue Velvet," directed by David Lynch, depicts a small town's prettiness and charm as a mere mask for its underlying psycho-terror — a theme Lynch extended in his popular television series, "Twin Peaks." More recently, Jonathan Demme's film, "Silence of the Lambs," portrays Middle America in a similar way. The small town to which an FBI investigator tracks down a psycho-killer is symbolic of the film's message which, as Chris Lehmann has shown, is "that ordinary American life festers with all the necessary ingredients of psycho-sexual carnage . . ." Demme's portrayal of a slummy small town America is contrasted with the clean offices (and activities) of the FBI. Thus the movie winds up suggesting that "the stagnant and morally deranged backwaters of American society can be redeemed only at the behest of young professionals, and federal law-enforcement professionals at that."[16] The filmmaker as artist in both "Blue Velvet" and "Silence of the Lambs" uses art to legitimate the cultural dominance of a chic, "sophisticated" postmodern jet set.

Any populist critique of the NEA should have some idea of what "good" culture might look like. Lawrence Levine has documented how a serious populist culture existed in the 19th-century US. This culture was based largely on "classical" works such as Shakespeare and European operas, but what made them populist was their reception by people of all walks of life.[17] Levine's analysis can be extended to the 20th century, for any concern with populist culture must concentrate on the appropriation of culture by people, i.e., the reincorporation of art into everyday life.

The problem with such a task is that over the last few years a split has developed between support for a radical avant-garde and calls for patriotic art. This

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and bureaucratization of the arts community over the last few decades. Cf. E. L. Doctorow, "Art vs. the Uniculture," in *The Nation* (Nov. 25, 1991), p. 675.

14. See Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984).

15. Paul Matick, Jr., "Arts and the State," *The Nation* (October 1, 1990), p. 354.

16. Chris Lehmann, "Jonathan Demme and the Aesthetics of Contempt," *Tikkun* (July/August, 1991), p. 78.

17. Lawrence Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988).

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polarity began during the 1940s with Dwight Macdonald's criticism of Van Wyck Brooks. In criticizing Brooks' celebration of American national literature, Macdonald upheld the only ideal he could grasp — that of the alienated intellectual and the avant-garde modernist project.[18] While Macdonald's argument is cogent, especially for its time (as is Adorno's defense of modernism), it has left a false polarity in its wake. Seemingly, there are two sides: avant-gardism and schmaltz. This false polarity represses a tradition within American literature, one both native in its focus and yet critical and often experimental in style. Commenting on Hofstadter's condemnation of America's absorption in the past, Christopher Lasch writes: "An aggressive, indiscriminating modernism that dismissed all [popular works by such people as James Agee, Allen Tate, and others] as retrograde and politically reactionary — and most of them were subjected at one time or another to this kind of attack, if not by Hofstadter then by like-minded literary critics in *Partisan Review* — left no alternative to nostalgia except a cosmopolitanism wholly contemptuous of American popular culture."[19] What must be remembered here is that there is such a thing as a native literature which is neither sentimental nor wholly avant-gardist: e.g., Walt Whitman's poetry, some of Mark Twain's work, Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*, Faulkner's use of the South as a subject matter, Salinger's novels, and other works. Along with these writers there is the vision of Thomas Hart Benton, a painter best known for his murals of the 1930s. Benton clearly argued against academic art, modernist art and agitprop; his hope was for art rooted in the regional and local cultures of the US. But Benton's paintings were not schmaltz, and were often attacked by politicians and businessmen for being overly critical. When Benton openly defended his art in question-answer periods, he did not attack the "people" as his enemy, but rather "politicians" and businessmen. Although he supported government aid to artists in 1935, he was wary that, as one art historian put it, "public administrators would become meddlesome and probably would not allow realistic treatments of modern American life."[20] It is Benton's vision, along with the tradition of writing represented by James Agee and others — a tradition that is native, rooted in local customs, and challenging in form and substance — which should be upheld against the Right's celebration of patriotic art and the Left's kowtowing to the avant-garde. A populist culture should be neither dismissive of people's values nor degenerate into schmaltz.

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18. Dwight Macdonald, *Memoirs of a Revolutionist* (New York: Meridian, 1958), pp. 208-13.

19. Christopher Lasch, *The True and Only Heaven* (New York: Norton, 1991), p. 115.

20. The quote is from Matthew Baigell, *Thomas Hart Benton* (New York: Harry Abrams, Inc., 1975), p. 87. On Benton's attack on certain forms of art and his defense of localist art, see Matthew Baigell, "Thomas Hart Benton and the Left," *Thomas Hart Benton: Artist, Writer, Intellectual*, ed. by R. Douglas Hurt and Mary K. Dains (State Historical Society of Missouri, 1989), p. 11. On his attacks against politicians instead of the people, see Bob Priddy, "Public Art and Political Controversy," *Thomas Hart Benton: Artist, Writer, Intellectual*, p. 140.

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Race vs. Gender: The Post-Modern Politics of the Thomas Confirmation Hearings

Moishe Gonzales

The US Senate hearings to confirm Judge Clarence Thomas as a member of the Supreme Court may have a more lasting pedagogical function than titillating North American TV audiences with X-rated trivia such as *Long Dong Silver* and coining dubious new slogans such as "high-tech lynching." Contrary to the usually superficial characterization of the proceedings by Ted Koppel and the rest of the media, they cannot be reduced to merely another instance of exceptionally nasty "hard-ball politics," or to the sudden realization of the pervasiveness of the hitherto repressed evils of "sexual harassment in the workplace." They represent the latest stages of a long process which has been fundamentally transforming American society: the institutionalization of post-modern politics. They have unwittingly introduced an otherwise apathetic public to new political realities and their post-affirmative action dynamics.

The traditional political practices of modernity, predicated on relatively clear and universally accepted "rules of the game," are becoming obsolete. They remain primarily as a legitimating façade concealing a new and altogether different process. The allegedly "logocentric" insistence on rational discourse, logical arguments and substantial documentation as accepted means of persuasion for achieving consensus seem to have given way to a post-modern redefinition of politics whereby the opponent is not to be persuaded but destroyed, a relativism ready to challenge anything at any time, and the pursuit of particular political objectives by whatever means available. Nominalist in character and dismissive of the constitutive role of the whole over the parts, post-modern pseudo-radicalism refuses to acknowlege anything beyond the immediately given. This obsession with immediacy has the paradoxical consequence of presupposing the soundness of the whole while systematically undermining those institutional mediations whereby the whole particularizes itself into the given. The result is the arbitrary privileging of particular values over and above institutional structures and the further depletion of any lingering sense of that social trust essential for the smooth functioning of all societies. This institutional delegitimation cannot be understood as the occasional malfunctioning of an otherwise sound and stable system. Rather, it reflects the consequences of profound structural trends which have gradually redefined American politics.

What made the Thomas hearings exceptional was the particular political

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context within which they took place and the fact that the appointment in question was for an office whose role has changed drastically since it was first institutionalized. The present constitutionally unexpected split within the federal government between a Republican Administration and a Democratic Senate politicizes Supreme Court appointments without providing clear-cut procedures to resolve differences. What makes this predicament even more recalcitrant to any orderly resolution by means of established political practices is the historical shift of the Supreme Court — from the highest level of the judiciary to one of the most important legislative branches of government. With so much at stake it is not surprising that the the whole process has undergone such post-modern hyper-politicization.

This redefinition of politics was implicit in the Bush Administration's cynical choice of Thomas not only on ideological grounds but also in terms of his likelihood to win Senate confirmation. The cynicism had nothing to do with the choice not being based on personal merit or professional qualification but, rather, with its successful instrumentalization of racial considerations — a central concern of groups otherwise adamantly opposed to anyone sharing Thomas' ideology to checkmate reservations about his otherwise obvious lack of professional qualifications and his unusually conservative politics. Racial justice as a supra-legal value overriding all other legal and moral concerns effectively checkmated the reservations of those swing Senate votes which proved to be decisive. Had Thomas been white, there is little doubt that he would have been booted out of consideration long before he could have had a chance to say "natural law." The Bush Administration tactically conceded the otherwise officially rejected "affirmative action" claim that Thurgood Marshall's seat was *de facto* Afro-American. Thus it made it extremely difficult for liberal affirmative action advocates in the US Senate to disqualify the candidate, notwithstanding the fact that he is likely to undermine constitutionally all future affirmative action policies. In so doing, however, the Administration opposed the Democrats' post-modern political strategy of overprivileging particular values above all else with equally questionable post-modern means. By deploying race as a Trojan horse concealing a conservative ideology otherwise unlikely to win confirmation, the Administration accepted the new rules of the game. Thus it risked winning this particular battle, but only at the cost of losing the war, i.e., the defense of whatever remains of the traditional constitutional system.

The counteroffensive was even more cynical. Unable to nail Thomas on his questionable qualifications (since he refused to take any substantive position on anything other than his own background), the opposition sought to discredit his character by recourse, at the last possible moment, to the only other issue as emotionally charged as race: gender. The struggle to achieve gender equality has also taken a post-modern turn by becoming *the* one and only concern of many feminist groups willing to compromise almost anything, from the First Amendment on down, to achieve it. Consequently, in the present context, it takes the form of the defense of abortion rights as a means to protect women's

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autonomy by guaranteeing individual women's control over biological reproduction — a process which has historically and disproportionately burdened women and, therefore contributed significantly to structural gender inequalities.

Thus it is not surprising that during the past decade these feminist groups have turned abortion rights into the litmus test for potential Supreme Court justices. The exertion of their considerable political influence on Democratic senators holding veto power over such appointments have helped create a paradoxical predicament. Nominees holding views on abortion deemed ideologically unacceptable to feminist groups either have had to conceal them or refuse to defend them publically. Convinced that Thomas would help reverse the *Roe v. Wade* decision on abortion, when the candidate refused to commit himself on the subject in order to deflect the kind of political attacks that had been effective in disqualifying Robert Bork, these groups frantically searched for any damaging material that could be used to destroy his character. They eventually found Anita Hill and managed to turn the issue into one of sexual harassment. The question of professional qualifications remained moot, while particular ideological considerations were played out behind demagogic concerns with character flaws — all on the basis of *one* tenuous, 10-year old, unsubstantiated allegation. Ultimately Thomas was confirmed because race considerations proved more compelling than alleged transgression of the suddenly decisive ambiguous code regulating gender relations in the workplace, and there was nothing else standing in the way to bloc the Administration's *Realpolitik*.

What is peculiar in this case is not so much the level of vulgarity allowed on national TV, the nature of the tactics deployed, or the intensity of the debate surrounding the proceedings, but two largely unnoticed developments: 1) the radical change of the US Supreme Court from the highest level of the judiciary into the most important legislative branch of government; and 2) the displacement of the primacy of legality (as the presupposition of politics) by highly charged moral considerations based on race and gender. These two developments are not unrelated and have contributed significantly to the growing crisis of ungovernability. Ultimately they are rooted in unresolved problems of American *federalism* which for the past century has gradually given way to a highly centralized *national* government without, however, developing any of the national institutions and social preconditions necessary to allow it to function effectively. Conflicting moral values defining nationality have come to take center stage within the new *de facto* national government. But their necessarily homogenizing character contradicts the axiological heterogeneity presupposed by the existing US constitutional framework. Thus their articulation as logically prior to and determining laws renders suspect existing formal legality predicated on guaranteeing pluralism, differences and heterogeneity. Ultimately, even if it were politically possible, the institutionalization of *any* of these particular values as the substantive foundation of federal law would render the US as it has been for the past two centuries: impossible to sustain.

This is neither business-as-usual nor a major historical watershed but the

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result of the maturation of problems already present at the time of the drafting of the US Constitution — problems which have become considerably more severe in the 20th century with the development of the US as a *nation* and a world power. The process of nation-building, begun in earnest only after the Civil War and effectively institutionalized only with WWI, has effectively subverted the federal framework and thrown its major institutions into crisis — a crisis exemplified paradigmatically by the tribulations surrounding the Thomas confirmation to the US Supreme Court.

How is it that the nomination of a Supreme Court justice has become such a crucial political event? Projected as a means for adjudicating disputes arising among or transcending the particular states, within the original American federal framework, the Supreme Court was meant primarily as a *regulative* institution entrusted with interpreting the US Constitution and determining how it applied to particularly problematic cases. As such its members' political orientation was rather secondary since *substantive* determinations were to be made at lower jurisdictional levels or by other branches of government. This is why the *appointment* of Supreme Court justices was left to the executive branch entrusted with overseeing the well-being of the whole, the President, and the *confirmation* to the legislative branch concerned with representing a multiplicity of particular regional interests, the Senate.

Since the US legal system is a mixture of English Common Law (based primarily on traditional practices and community precedents) and Roman Law (based on codification and the sharp separation of powers), the selection process entrusts the president with determining primarily professional qualifications and the Senate with establishing the candidate's adequate immersion in those traditions and customs which informally enter into especially difficult juridical decisions. When both the presidency and the Senate are under the control of the same party the system works fairly close to how it was projected. However, because of its new *de facto* legislative role, when one political party controls the presidency and the other the Senate — as has become increasingly the case — the system breaks down and becomes vulnerable to the kind of post-modern political struggles exemplified by the Thomas confirmation.

In the case of Thomas, and to a lesser extent also in the case of most Supreme Court nominees recently appointed by various presidents — at least since FDR — the paramount criterion has been neither juridical competence nor experience but *political correctness*. This is because the role of the Supreme Court has changed drastically. From a primarily regulative institution it has turned into the key legislative branch of government. One need only try to identify the most important pieces of legislation over the past half century to realize the extent to which it is no longer either Congress or the Executive that legislates on key issues, but the Supreme Court. Thus both the desegregation order of 1954 and the 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision concerning abortion were neither congressional mandates nor executive policies, but deliberate acts of the Supreme Court.

This institutional rearrangment is not the result of any power grab on the part

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of the Court, but one possible resolution of a fundamental ambiguity in the US Constitution. As a *federal* constitution with a *democratic* base (the Constitution is based on "We, the people . . ." rather than "We, the states . . .") the role of any intermediate political aggregation between individual citizens and the federal government is subordinate to this fundamental document. As further protection of individual citizens *vis à vis* these intermediate political bodies — primarily the states — the Bill of Rights codifies a whole series of fundamental values guaranteed against any possible state abrogation. Understood as negative restrictions on the states' domination of their citizens, these stipulations worked relatively well in guaranteeing individual freedoms. When, however, the federation turned *de facto* into a nation, as happened between the two world wars, these negative rights became a series of positive entitlements subsequently expanded by civil rights legislation and questionable Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution. They became the substantive value foundations whose constitutional embodiment determines all subsequent laws and regulations. This does not mean that these rights and entitlements are undesirable or unworthy but, rather, that in order to maintain the original federally-mandated autonomy of the various members of the federation they should have been mandated at the state rather than the federal level.

Within this new national context the Supreme Court ceases to be primarily a regulative legal body adjudicating conflicts arising between lower-level jurisdictions within the federation, i.e., the juridical loci where substantial questions are to be addressed. Instead, it becomes a legal body indistinguishable from all other state courts, concerned with determining the continuity between constitutionally mandated substantive values and all subsequent legislation. As such the choice of its members can no longer be merely a matter of professional qualifications and personal merit (something that can best be decided by an executive branch concerned with the federation as a whole) and of familiarity with predominant traditions and customs (something best determined by a regionally differentiated Senate). The choice of justices serving on a *national* Supreme Court becomes a matter of fundamental democratic prerogatives whose political character cannot be effectively negotiated solely between the presidency and the Senate. It must involve the democratic decision of the nation as a whole. Yet today there are no institutional means to allow for the direct expression of *vox populi*. Lacking a better alternative, the influence peddling of lobbies and particular interest groups becomes the substitute for a more appropriate democratic procedure. This is why feminist, minority and other interest groups have received so much media and official committee attention.

Unlike ordinary democratic processes which engage citizens as individuals relating to society on a variety of levels and in various roles, lobbies and interest groups hypostatize particularistic issues whose realization becomes the one and only objective. Reduced to the articulation of particular values, often the redress of injustices and inequality, these groups relate to politics instrumentally, with no particular respect for established "rules of the game," regarded not primarily

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as the embodiment of worthwhile traditions but as implicit tools of domination perpetuating inequalities and injustices. Here the end tends to justify the means and, if to disqualify Thomas it is necessary to identify questionable character traits documentable only by digging up some improper sexual behavior he may have engaged in a decade earlier, so be it.

This post-modern politics polarizes society in such a way that it renders persuasion and consensus irrelevant. The federal ideal of institutionally guaranteeing the freedom and particularity of religions, beliefs and lifestyles of communities living peacefully and productively within a shared political framework has already given way to politically correct behavior — a behavior legitimated by appealing to particular transcendental-values hypostatized to the level of pseudo-universality and by enforcing compliance through an instrumentalized new legality presumably embodying these particularistic values. But within a *de facto* heterogeneous society where these homogenizing values have not been previously internalized legality becomes politicized in the sense that it is no longer seen as the embodiment of collectively shared norms, but as an instrument of domination. Acceptance or transgression of its rules becomes a matter of either political choice or mere expediency.

The same tactics which worked so well for the civil rights movement in the 1960s turn out to be effectively employed by "pro-lifers" wishing to universalize their particular morality into binding constitutional principles. In either case the ultimate victim is a legal system no longer warranting *internalization* because it is "right," but requiring *enforcement* because compliance with it has now become a contingency. Since in heterogeneous societies even the most legitimate form of legality must necessarily privilege one set of values over all others, its unavoidable onesidedness will remain open to challenges from those groups whose values and interests it automatically excludes. Thus fundamental political conflicts always involve either the homogenization of all otherness to fit the existing framework or the redefinition of legality to acknowledge the autonomy of that otherness which cannot be homogenized. The former constitutes nation-building while the latter is the *raison d'être* for federalism.

The genius of the US Constitution consists precisely in its recognition of this predicament and its attempt to institutionalize a viable solution. In the 20th century the statist overprivileging of the nation at the expense of the federation has, in its most extreme cases, resulted in what has been called "the dictatorship over needs" and the Holocaust — understood as the most extreme forms of forced social homogenization. Federalism has either been eclipsed or distorted beyond recognition. The politics of the Thomas confirmation hearings exemplify all the contradictions that arise when an originally ambiguous federal system turns into a nation: its legality becomes instrumentalized and thereby delegitimated. As the collapse of communist regimes has demonstrated, however, no society can survive long if it has to rely on enforcing those social norms which can only function if they are effectively internalized.

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The Cultural War between East and West

Luciano Pellicani

In one of his last interviews, Claude Levi-Strauss wrote: "I have recently begun to think about how our culture attacks other cultures which, as a consequence, I have defended. Now I think that the trend has been reversed and our culture is on the defensive *vis à vis* external threats, especially the Islamic threat. Suddenly, I feel ethnologically and strongly defensive of my culture." These words encapsulate the global conflict involving incompatible systems. The explosion of the means of communication has turned the world into a "global village" and has increasingly forced many cultures to interact and clash. This cultural war has many causes. In order to analyze it one must go back to the time of European colonial expansion.

No civilizations are impenetrable. All of them have absorbed alien cultural elements and have exported and imported cultural goods. No cultural border is hermetically sealed, and the unavoidable exchange generates a dialogue which regulates relations between civilizations. Such dialogue is not conflict-free. All too often cultural exchanges have taken place through violent clashes among civilizations. War has been a powerful means of communication and cultural hybridization. One need only think of how much Europe gained from Islamic civilization at the times of the Crusades.

Similarly, all civilizations refuse to accept those cultural goods which threaten, or seem to threaten, their identity. It is easy to understand why: civilizations are kept together by historical continuity. This is why they try to maintain a firm bond with their past. Cultural traditions define their identities. Rapid processes of acculturation pervert civilizations by eroding this historical identity. This is why civilizations resist global acculturation and why the cultural goods they borrow are carefully selected and assimilated. It is through such a process that civilizations are transformed without becoming corrupted, thus retaining the crucial nucleus of their identity, which is ultimately always religious in nature. Civilization is made up of collective values lived as if they were permanent or even sacred. This is true even of modern Western civilization which, notwithstanding the fact that secularization has restricted the sacred to a minimum, owes much more than is generally assumed to the Christian tradition.

Today, for the first time in history, a global industrialized civilization has emerged. Whereas previous civilizations existed within geographically delimited areas, Western civilization knows no boundaries; its expanding potential is

* Translated by Florindo Volpacchio.

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virtually unlimited. It was born after a difficult period of gestation, and by the end of the 15th century it began to spread throughout the world. What is problematic with European civilization is that it did not come to dominate the rest of the world militarily, but, rather, its expansionist character is constituted by its central institution: a market that knows no borders. It is a global institution which tends to submit everything it contacts to its catalactic logic and to sweep away all interests, beliefs, institutions and values. It expands like a growing cultural avalanche. Not by accident did Marx define capitalism as "permanent revolution" with an ecumenical calling. Wherever it has penetrated it has produced cataclysmic changes which have spared nothing and no one. Because of its destructive creativity and its self-propelling dynamism, all non-European cultures have been embroiled in one destiny. Western civilization has literally besieged other civilizations and confronted them with a challenge: find a way to respond or end up transformed into cultural colonies of the capitalist center.

This process is historically unprecedented. Although there have been other civilizations which have spread their cultures outside their geographic areas, none have been able to do so everywhere and to attack what may be called the genetic codes of other cultures. Today, relations between East and West are characterized by permanent cultural aggression. Although classical colonialism has ended, former colonies remain under a different sort of siege. They are confronted with an alien culture which tends to drown them with its impressive flow of goods, messages, values, technologies and institutions.

Here it is useful to recall Toynbee's theory of cultural aggression. He claims that when two civilizations meet, the one endowed with greater expanding power triggers a radical change in the mimetic attitude of the other. The "inferior" civilization begins to imitate the alien way of life, either because it is fascinated by it or because it is the easiest way to escape its humiliating condition of inferiority and thus avoid the threat of being degraded to the rank of a colony. If this mimetic process does take place, the "inferior" society can neutralize the external threat, since in order to become like the "superior" civilization it needs to make rapid radical modifications in its internal organization. An adequate response to the outside challenge entails a quick institutional adaptation comparable to a painful, surgical operation. A classical example of this was the so-called "Meiji revolution," whereby Japan managed to avoid being degraded to the status of a Western colony by transplanting various alien cultural elements.

Up to this point encounters between two civilizations are unproblematic: one adopts the conditions imposed by the other and continues to develop harmoniously by maintaining or even increasing its ability to determine its own destiny. When, however, societies confronted with outside cultural expansion are in such a state of disintegration or, even worse, of decadence, that their fundamental structures have become overly rigid, they are unable to come up with quick and effective adaptive answers. Thus the first impulse will be an anxious

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and obstinate resistance to the culture threatening to pervert its basic values and spiritual identity. At the same time, the impact fragments into a variety of elements penetrating with different speed and power. The resistance of the cultures under attack hinders a gradual and harmonious process of acculturation, while allowing the penetration of isolated cultural fragments whose long term impact cannot be controlled.

Here Toynbee suggests three things. The first is that the power of a cultural element to penetrate is proportionate to its level of futility and superficiality. This means that societies under attack end up accepting those elements easiest to imitate or least undesirable. Thus the process of forced acculturation results in a reverse selection: the cultural elements which manage to penetrate are inferior ones, with devastating consequences for the society under attack. Secondly, a cultural element which has been innocuous and even beneficial within the society where it originally developed tends to produce new and devastating effects in societies in which it comes as an intruder. Thirdly, since cultures are integral systems, all cultural elements are inseparable. Thus the threatened society's efforts to prevent the penetration of cultural elements deemed undesirable are ultimately futile. Once in motion the acculturation process is irreversible and efforts to stop it only make the whole process more painful.

When it becomes clear that cultural penetration cannot be stopped and that the ability of the society under attack to remain autonomous is weak, a "disintegrating party" comes into being, i.e., a party of those who take on an attitude opposite to that of the "zealots." Rather than reject the foreign culture outright, these people support a steady process of acculturation. To prevent forced colonization, they advocate a kind of self-colonization which appears to the zealots as the road leading to the destruction of their society's spiritual identity. The result is the inevitable struggle between modernizers and traditionalists. For the former, salvation lies only in opening the community to the alien influence; for the latter, it entails the hermetic closing of cultural frontiers.

Toynbee's analysis of cultural invasion describes primarily modern civilization's cultural penetration of the East and its troublesome effects. This penetration is not limited to the destruction of whatever institutions, customs and values get in the way, but has also resulted in torture, deprived people of their ancestral habitat and condemned them to live in a world transformed into something foreign and hostile. In other words, by assaulting cultures outside its area of endogenous development, capitalism has eradicated millions of people, transforming them into a single, gigantic alienated mass. These millions of individuals, scattered throughout the cultural areas which gave rise to the capitalist market and the type of culture which goes along with it, have resurfaced as an unstoppable exogenous power endowed with a "monstrous" destructive potentiality — Western civilization's "external proletariat."

Non-Western societies' encounter with modernity has had so many perverse consequences that they can be described as induced cultural catastrophes. While the market had a secondary function within the traditional frameworks

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of Asiatic and African societies, forced acculturation has reversed the relation and now these frameworks have become secondary with respect to the market. Through colonization, the latter has been "liberated" from community bonds in order to subjugate them to the impersonal laws of competition and profit. This "liberalization" has brought about the alienation of colonized people with respect to their work, their community and their ancestral culture.

The split between the economic and social spheres has also produced anonomic consequences in Europe. After decades of struggles, the "internal proletariat" has managed to escape its humiliating pariah-like condition thanks to spectacular economic growth and the development of welfare institutions. In Third World countries, however, the human costs associated with the intrusion of the self-regulating market within traditional communities have been amplified by the cultural differences between the aggressors and their victims. Depending on specific historical circumstances, the exploitation of labor has been more or less intense, as it has not been buffered by that national solidarity between the rulers and the ruled — something which did exist in Europe. In the colonized countries there could be no kind of affective identification or shared moral values, other than a hypocritical paternalistic tutelage. For generations the "white man's burden" was the rhetorical formula behind which Europeans hid the human degradation of colonized people: as naturally inferior, the latter were deemed in need of external discipline.

Toynbee's analysis helps clarify why there is a cultural war between the West and those countries ruled by the party of zealots — the unwavering defenders of national traditions. The most obvious example of reactionary zealots against modernity is provided by the Iranian revolution — a call to arms against Western civilization, which Khomeini did not hesitate to depict as the "Great Satan." Khomeini understood that the Shah's economic and technological modernization was not limited to production. It extended to cultural secularization and the gradual delegitimation of religious traditions to the point of challenging Iranian identity. Thus it was necessary to stop the intrusion of modern civilization before it was too late, i.e., before Western values and lifestyles proceeded any further in the wake of economic and technological innovations. He thought that the only way to prevent his people's loss of identity was to erect an impenetrable barrier to keep out foreign cultural elements. To the extent that "Western contamination" had already infected Iranian society, he launched a policy of "purification" predicated on the need to punish mercilessly those who introduced or perpetuated the evil. The stated objective was to expel whatever contaminated the sacred tradition: to stop the process of modernization and secularization by rejecting whatever appeared to be an expression of Western civilization.

Similarly instructive was the *modus operandi* of the Cambodian revolution. It was also a totalitarian reaction against modernity. The Agkar proposed to close Cambodian society by eliminating from it whatever elements Western colonization had brought, i.e. the market, individualism, axiological polytheism

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and rationalism. Pol Pot's ruthless experiment was carried out under the insignia of communist progressivism. The latter, however, was only a mask hiding the nationalistic resentment of an *elite* proletarianized by cultural colonization, which had learned from the Marxist-Leninist Left that the salvation of "the damned of the Earth" required the uprooting of everything related to capitalism and liberalism.

The Cambodian revolution was not a phenomenon *sui generis*. On the contrary, with its extreme anti-modernism it brought to light the spirit of communist revolutions which has been primarily a zealous reaction against modern civilization. All the basic values and institutions of modernity — competition, the contract, individual liberty, representative democracy, enlightened rationalism, etc. — were rejected as manifestations of an "unnatural" and "perverse" organization of society. This explains why Soviet propaganda did not hesitate to use the ideological formula "rotten West," so dear to the Russian zealots better known as "slavophiles." This articulated the hostile animus of communist culture *vis à vis* the West and its determination to fuse in a single revolutionary army the internal and the external proletariat — "the damned of the Earth" — with the stated objective to raze modern civilization to the ground. Not by accident did Anton Pannekoek see in the Bolshevik Revolution the first Asiatic reaction against European domination. Today this historical drama has been reversed: the victim has become the aggressor and vice versa. This becomes obvious if one recalls that Russia has always been related to Western civilization, while remaining distinct: a civilization based on religious orthodoxy, spiritual collectivism, and the primacy of state over society which, subjected to the humiliating cultural pressure of Europe since the 19th century, has seen Westernization as a deadly threat to its spiritual identity.

For over seventy years the Soviet Union believed it had found the secret for importing Western civilization's know-how without being contaminated by its animating spirit. At a certain point, beginning with the Stalinist revolution, it proudly claimed to have found the magic formula — the planned economy — in which the forces of production would be developed indefinitely to create a social organization technically and morally superior to capitalism. Such a conviction has also plagued Third World elites, leading them to think that there was a road to industrial society which would allow them to avoid adopting the institutions of the civilization threatening them. Now, however, this conviction has turned out to be a catastrophic illusion. The mode of production based on the central plan has turned out to be what it was all along: an anti-economy, structurally unable to guarantee the rational use of scarce resources. This confronts Africans and Asians with an unavoidable choice — either to go the way of the West with the deliberate objective of self-colonization, or to reject every cultural contamination and therefore remain in the swamp of misery and technological, scientific and economic dependence.

Toynbee was right when he claimed that a material acculturation was impossible without its spiritual counterpart. This means that the only way to

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industrialize is to adopt the basic Western institutions of modernity: the market, political pluralism and secularism. For Eastern societies, however, Westernization means to break with the past, to cut off all ties with traditions and to lose their spiritual identity in order to flow into the river of modernity. It means to accept as unavoidable what in the 1920s Trubetskoi called "the nightmare of universal Europeanization." Thus it does not seem likely that "the world's insomnia" will end soon in a new peaceful and democratic world order.

*The End of National Culture in Eastern Europe**

Claude Karnoouh

Since 1989 *all* East European countries have experienced historically unprecedented events. There have never been political transformations of this magnitude without revolution or war. Communist regimes have collapsed and, in the usual ignorant and spectacular fashion, the media depicts it as something completely unexpected. After the 20th Communist Party Congress, however, many serious flaws in the system became obvious. At that time the shortcomings of state-controlled industry and the incompetence of centralized economic management seemed evident to anyone blessed with common sense. Subsequently, the repression of intellectuals and youth signaled an ideological undoing which would eventually affect the overwhelming majority of East Europeans. While, between 1960 and 1990 Western capitalist thinking overran the collective consciousness, the same ideals and behaviors penetrated even official communist propaganda, which came to employ cultural forms borrowed from the West. Thus, e.g., during the last years of communist power, officially organized rock concerts in Eastern Europe praised the marvels of Communism.

Today Eastern Europe exemplifies the modern socio-cultural dialectic: precisely because these political regimes were popular democracies, they were undermined by the systemic transformations and popular behaviors they engendered. This dynamic extends even to the atypical case of Romania, where, for the most part, Ceausescu's own heirs carried out the bloody December 1989 *coup d'état*.

This has been an all-out victory for the West — a victory in which cultural

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advances have preceded economic ones. The popularity of American TV series, for example, prominent since the early 1970s, seems to fly in the face of the Romanians' finicky cultural nationalism. The attraction of such programs as *Dallas, Mannix, and Columbo* cuts accross all political, social and religious barriers — from village priests to well-known intellectuals, from obscure employees of agricultural cooperatives to pretentious *apparatchiki*. The spectators' commentary offers an inexhaustible source of glosses indicating how much the American series, especially *Dallas*, offers tangible proof of a possible earthly paradise, however it may or may not correspond to individual conceptions of the future. It is something accessible, perhaps tomorrow, for those seeking emigration to the West, while, for the overwhelming majority, the series only offers the illusion of a pre-ordained, probable, though unclear, future of abundance. The masses seem willing to accept this vision, even if it means little more than increased technological development. As soon as one series ends another one follows, spreading the dream from Budapest to Prague, from Brussels to Tahiti.

Why would Romanian communists, renowned for their cultural autocracy, succumb to what may be regarded as counter-propaganda? Should this onslaught of American images be considered the result of clever marketing? Perhaps it is the result of such marketing that the US has succeeded in exchanging, among other things, most-favored-nation status for a much more efficient cultural presence, far outstripping earlier unsuccessful attempts at providing cultural services, such as visiting professorships. While this is plausible, it does not capture the sense of bewitchment felt by all Romanians with the American series. Because of their religious and historic traditions, other East European countries can sometimes create an illusion of proximity to the West, especially when talented intellectuals talk in universal terms. But the case of Romania is by far the most striking because of the Latin derivation of its language — as if grammatical structure could somehow result in cultural similarity between peoples of completely diverse backgrounds. Rather than the result of a conflict between coexisting spheres of political influence, the ineffable success of the American series is the clearest indication of a new generalized *Weltanschauung*.

Many other East European events confirm the US cultural triumph. Today Western Europe exports only products catering to American taste. Pepsi-Cola, Coca-Cola, T-shirts, jeans, whisky, tourist hotels and their international fare, pop, folk, rock and country music and, last but not least, English as *the* medium of international communication — all attest to these cultural victories. A major American triumph came in 1988 with the historical Hungarian compromise: the projection of the first Hungarian pornographic film in Budapest and the opening of two new MacDonalds. At that time it was assumed that Yugoslavia was the only democratic communist country, since it produced numerous pornographic magazines whose only apparent defects to the eye of those familiar with Western porn was the quality of the paper and print, and the models' evident unease. Today Yugoslavia seems to have been overtaken

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by post-communist Hungary and Romania. Since the first running of a Formula One Grand Prix in an East European country in August 1988, the Western media, with an atypical wealth of detail and jubilation, has delighted in describing every aspect of it. Besides identifying thousands of Hungarian spectators, they also announced the arrival of hundreds of buses bringing cohorts from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Allegedly this signaled the emergence of true democracy. What could Hungary have gained from such an obviously futile enterprise in which it had to sink 400 million dollars? Why did Hungary lay out so much capital with no positive implications for its most pressing social concerns — poverty, homelessness, unemployment and prostitution — all of which are growing at an exponential rate, at a time when the government was facing a delicate economic situation?

Since WWII, Eastern Europe has irreversibly entered the modern era. Thus today *Vatci utca* in Budapest is just another of those pedestrian walkways found in all West European cities. The new, identically decorated bath houses, both Romanian and Bulgarian, planted along the banks of the Black Sea or, more recently, those on the banks of the Balaton. They convey the very same summer resorts found everywhere in Europe and the same cheaply-acquired ambiance of false wealth offered to tourists. The folk items in the windows of stores selling imported electronic gadgets and the folk dances in nightclubs are grotesquely anachronistic references to archaic pseudo-traditions. They are less luxurious and well-organized versions of the same spectacles offered throughout the world to vacationers longing for inoffensive, exotic distractions. Folk dance music, rock and roll, slow dance songs and rap are all available as interchangeable means of entertainment accessible between sessions of tanning and sailing. Travel agencies have long-since transforomed adventure, with its inherent risks and unexpected discoveries, into guided tours or "hikes" through Moldavian monasteries, African safaris or outings in Nepal. Danger is all but done away with, thanks to the vigilance of "Europe Assistance."

Western travelers motivated by more than the desire to see their image reproduced in other lands are surprised by seemingly insignificant events which turn out to embody cultural and political values. Thus the thirst for blue jeans and t-shirts can be found in the most remote villages of the Romanian Carpathians, where the inhabitants have plenty of functional, solid clothing still made according to traditional methods. Here, as in so many other places, modernity is confused with what is depicted by movies, television and board rooms on the other side of the Atlantic. More generally, technical innovation as a cultural medium seems to incorporate, out-do and sometimes counteract the politics that put specific innovations in place. Thus, thanks to tape-recorders and VCRs, rock music and movies have done more to advertise the American worldview than all the broadcasts of Radio Free Europe and Voice of America combined. Well before the collapse of communist regimes, a proliferation of do-it-yourself satellite dishes pulled in transmissions of thousands of TV programs. No political power could acquiesce to this phenomenon if it wanted to lay claim to legitimacy.

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Clearly, Romanian cultural isolation promulgated during the last decade of the Ceausescu Era had failed. By that time the virus of generalized international culture had penetrated the minds of a large number of people, including a whole range of nationalists. And not only were Romanians watching Yugoslav TV transmitted to the Western regions but, surprisingly, Hungarian TV in the North, Russian TV in the East and, above all, Bulgarian TV in the South, which had begun to show Western movies.

Culture has become generalized because the flux is no longer one-way, as it was when the West began to conquer the world. It no longer radiates from one centralized transmitter to passive receivers. A certain feedback is at work. Even if it only operates on a small scale, its impact is more important because of its new representations. Today the same techniques send cultural products from Eastern to Western countries, where they are well-received because differences are understandable through corresponding Western categories. These differences are actually disguised identities, since they can be comprehended with the same principles. Furthermore, the identification process now seems to be at work even in the cultural-political shows offered by local governments. Thus the 1983 May Day parade in Budapest resembled a curious mixture of the People's Day in Eastern Europe, La Festa dell'Unità in Italy and an American parade. Beside the detached gaze of high-ranking state and Party officials and their families in the official grandstand, the crowd wandered about in a joyous atmosphere, clearly pleased to parade in a festive Sunday morning ambiance. But what gave this parade the mark of a generalized cultural entity and was its sign of the times came at the end as the grand finale. First, on the trailer of a truck bearing the sign, *Hungarofilm*, was a representation of a scene from the movie *Mephisto*, which had won the Oscar for "best foreign film" just a few months earlier in Hollywood. Then, at the closing, a large group of young men and women in gymnastic costumes, carrying cubes of different colors, tried to mimick the movements of the *Rubik Cube* — one of Hungary's best-known commercial successes. There was no sign of national culture or folklore, nor was there a siingle local historical or literary reference — nothing that was not a local version of things or ideas already seen elsewhere. As for the rock concert at the end, in the *Varosliget* gardens just behind the official grandstand, it could easily pass for a generic version of *Woodstock*, similar to events seen in Poland, East Germany and even Romania, where parts of the rock opera, *Istvan a Kiraly* (*King Stefan* — a kind of *Jesus Christ Super-Star* made in Hungary) were the only concessions to local folklore.

"Mass culture" defines a whole range of written, musical, and clothing products as well as audio-visual artifacts destined for mass consumption — even if their ridiculous asking prices are merely for the privilege of watching or listening to something. Mass culture is not a new creation. Its essence has not really changed, even if mass communication's new techniques have extended its grasp by extending its range. Mass culture is pursuing its homogenization especially since the crowds, once condemned to silence, are now asked to

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elect their leaders. These crowds, however, never totally forget their secret aspirations. That is why they sometimes become grateful and vote their previous leaders out of office, replacing them with new, untainted figures who are expected to fulfill their vanished hopes with new illusions. In the flux of this general movement, which they found intrinsically foreign, the nation-states of Eastern and Balkan Europe attempted to construct, for the sake of self-preservation, a national mass culture based on a popularized form of Herderism. But there always remained the question concerning how to enter universal trends while retaining some sense of the traditional: what is both unique and irreducible.

Paradoxically enough, each time a nation employs a new technique to get across the exact meaning of a message, the instrument used drives it towards a general homogenization and, therefore, erases its national character. This is why some ultra-national political regimes still use archaic techniques of cultural communication, like mass gatherings and military parades. Yet technique and economics are universal principles and the source of an almost autonomous system which reproduces its own expansion and erases all differences. If soviet-style economies have been less successful, it is only because of their clinging to the same old techniques. That has not stopped them from joining, at a slower pace, the common destiny of humanity. Many of the recent popular revolutions in communist countries were based not on a quest for liberty or a a yet-to-be-invented true democracy but — much to the dislike of Western human rights advocates — on something more trivial: the incompetence and inability of communist leaders to provide their people with decent standards of living comparable to those in Western Europe and the US.

Until the 1950s the old division between "avant garde" and national mass culture, along with various other regional and social cultures, was still accepted. This does not mean that movies, songs and successful books had not transcended national boundaries and linguistic differences. It does mean, however, that national cultures have intensified their efforts toward greater homogenization by destroying remaining archaic communities. The more what was nationally specific showed up as a negation of similar concepts developed outside its political boundaries, the more it belonged to a homogenized worldwide spirit. Are wars and the unprecedented destruction of the 20th century not the result of a confrontation between unyielding and fundamentally antagonistic national and ethnic units? At any rate, the great wars were not conflicts between intrinsically different cultures or world-views. Rather, they were symptoms of a deep-rooted identity crisis similar to the one that resulted in religious wars and brought down the Christian *comunitas*.

Since communication techniques undergo an accelerated process of innovation, they also generate general homogeneity. The most up-to-date weapons, transistor radios, tape recorders and VCRs do not accidentally break into the market. These objects are also the extension of concepts which drastically change their users' ideals. Having to face these new technical attacks, the national

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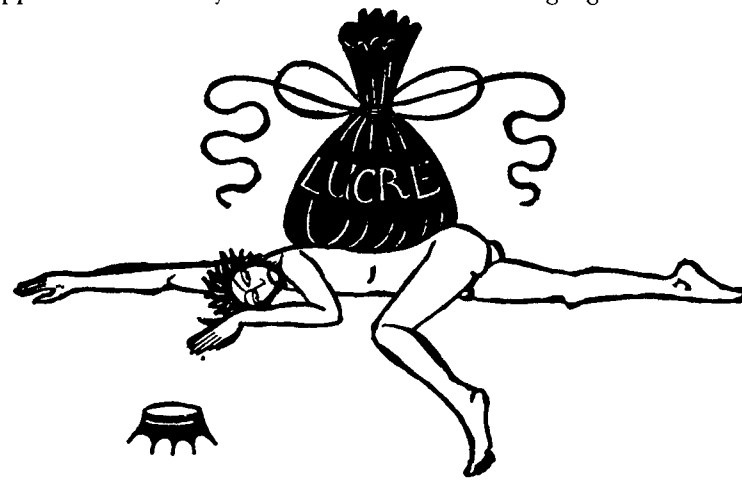
mass culture of Balkan countries is quickly losing ground, incapable of responding without imitating or conforming to what threatens them. Long before the Soviet empire erected its barriers, those "noble spirits" who themselves manipulated national identities and confused the free circulation of men and ideas with the idea of the free circulation of capital and merchandise had already obliterated national cultures for the benefit of yet another empire, one just as triumphant and even less interested in the preservation of national cultures: the US. Only idiots, amnesiacs and street vendors could believe that consuming Coke in Moscow, Bucharest or Budapest was a sign of democracy! The proof of this conclusion is the collapse of the best cultural products in the ex-communist countries of Eastern Europe. Film-making and publishing industries suddenly found themselves in ruins. Having to face the economic laws of a global market, the abandonment of the (state-controlled) conditions of production in the old communist countries have left the movie producers without resources. Indeed, movie-making industries in Eastern Europe were never seen as money-making propositions.

Central and Eastern Europe already confronted these deadly issues when hired media were busy mobilizing Western public opinion against the politics of nationality in Austria and Hungary. The national culture had already been stripped of any authenticity. Today conflicts emerging in the name of national independence in Baltic countries, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Transylvania appear to be even more of an illusion than at the end of WWI, when Central and Eastern Europe were still composed of many diverse archaic farming communities. Here history takes an ironic turn: as world standardization and intertwined economic systems have become tangible realities, there is a greater need for national culture. A national mass culture, however, is not an end in itself but, rather, a way to legitimate the unbridled quest for the kind of material well-being associated with Western countries at a time when it is evident that there is no direct connection between democracy and the idealistic vision of happiness — a society based on an abundance of gadgets.



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*Simplicity and the 1983 Turning Point: Reply to Susanne Peters**

Jeffrey Herf

Communism has collapsed in Europe and the Soviet Union. The specter of nuclear war between the Soviet Union and the West is also gone. Democracy and markets are trying to spread East. The West won the Cold War without firing a shot in Europe. *War By Other Means* is a history of one historically decisive, yet still most unappreciated, historical turning point which was one of many necessary preconditions for the subsequent turn of events. At the time, I believed the rhythm of world politics had been reversed for the better. Subsequent events have only deepened that conviction. So while I am grateful to Susanne Peters for the attention she devoted to the book, I regret that she did not take the opportunity to reflect critically on the political judgments and misjudgments of those who opposed the NATO deployments of 1983.

Peters finds *War By Other Means* "simplistic" and "misleading" because, in her view, I give insufficient attention to the central role played by "NATO's intention to modernize the means necessary for implementing NATO's strategy of flexible response." She adds that "the SS-20 threat served as a distraction to avoid a public discussion of the real contradictions in NATO's strategy of flexible response."

This is not convincing. While the NATO double-decision of 1979 had as part of its rationale a defense and elaboration of flexible response, I found no evidence to suggest that without the Soviet military build-up in general and the SS-20 build-up in particular the double-track decision of 1979 would have been taken. The evidence of belief and actions of political leaders does not support Peters' claim that the focus on the SS-20s was a mere distraction from the real basis for the Western decision. Take away the SS-2Os, as Helmut Schmidt was strongly urging Brezhnev to do as early as Spring 1977, and there would have been no decision to deploy Pershing 2 and Cruise missiles. The political reality, not my reconstruction of it, was just that "simplistic."

The centrality of Soviet *Vorrüstung* (arming before) for NATO's *Nachrüstung* (arming after), in the words of West German Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher, was manifestly clear in two decisions of the Reagan administration. First, in November 1991, it adopted the zero-zero option according to which

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* Susanne Peters, "The Euromissile Debate in Retrospect," a review of Jeffrey Herf's *War By Other Means. Soviet Power, West German Resistance and the Battle of the Euromissiles*, in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 205-210.

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the NATO decision would be canceled if the Soviets eliminated their SS-20s arsenal. Opponents of the NATO deployments in the US and Europe, and the Soviet leadership, called the zero-zero option a cynical propaganda ploy. Second, in 1987, when President Gorbachev agreed that the zero-zero option was a sound basis for an agreement, it took the Reagan administration, the Kohl government, and the whole Western Alliance less than a year to come to an agreement to scrap this whole class of nuclear weapons. The Western governments were pleased that Gorbachev had accepted their own proposal of 1981. It was a victory over the policies of Gorbachev's predecessors and for the principle of a balance of power, and improved East-West relations, which Helmut Schmidt had sought from 1977.

The drama of the Pershing 2 and the SS-20 may have become "simplistic," but Western political leaders saw the issue in these simple terms. Publicists opposed to the deployments offered elaborate and often apolitical and technocratic nuclear strategic lingo to suggest that the Soviet Union and its armaments were a peripheral issue for Western policy makers. Peters appears to repeat this argument. It is as unconvincing now as it was during the dispute.

One interesting issue concerns the reversal of the conventional, i.e., Habermasian, image according to which the Western democracies were characterized by depoliticizing governments seeking to "empty" a public sphere of meaningful debate, and dissenting intellectuals — of the Left — who sought to restore "genuine" and "democratic" public discussion. *War By Other Means* tells a different story in which Clausewitzians in the governments sought to explain the political dimensions of military issues, while opponents focused far more on the weapons themselves. In Peters' exclusive focus on the flexible response discussions, which of course played some role in formulating the NATO decision, I see echoes of this depoliticized and technocratic mode of thinking. Once again, the battle of the euromissiles in West Germany and Western Europe is incomprehensible without placing at its core the concerns aroused in Washington, Bonn, Brussels, London, Paris and Rome by the Soviet build-up in the "era of stagnation."

Peters criticizes me for "overemphasizing *individual* political positions." Here I plead guilty, though not to any "over" or excessive emphasis. We disagree about the role of individuals in history generally as well as in this set of events. In my writing on Nazi Germany, and more recently on the euro-missile dispute, I have indeed focused on individuals and their beliefs. In 1981 I translated Alfred Schmidt's critique of Althusserian Marxism during a period in which structuralists, post-structuralists, and conventional social scientists had pronounced the death of the subject or dissolved him or her into background variables of class, gender, age, religion and the like. It was and remains my view that what politically powerful individuals believe is crucial for the outcome of political events. Though I left the Marxism of Lukács and the Frankfurt School behind sometime ago, I retain the skepticism of mythic constructs, whether it be of a class as a collective subject-object of history or any subsequent abstractions

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— states, genders, discourses, world systems — which are said to "do" or "require" one thing or another. I should think that some Germans, tired of seeing their history presented as a litany of victimization by outside forces, would find refreshing an effort to grasp the subjectivity inherent in the interpretations of the world in essays, parliamentary debates, speeches, magazine articles and decisions of West Germans, and to illustrate how these beliefs and convictions came to make a significant difference in world politics.

It was partly for this reason that I devoted so much attention to Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr, rather than the mythic "post-materialistic" peace movement activist that social scientists told us about, as well as to advocates of the *Tendenzwende*, whose insights and arguments had been obscured in a fog of demonization. With access to a national audience for several decades, Brandt and Bahr reshaped the political culture, the political language and vocabulary, and not just the policy of West German left-of-center politics. This deconstruction was a significant cultural and political accomplishment, carried out with intelligence and persistence over a twenty year period. Likewise, the centrist Tocquevillean critique of the Brandt reform era was no less significant for reinvigorating resistance to Soviet pressures. However, before *War By Other Means* the arguments of the centrists and conservatives remained largely unknown outside West Germany, except in caricatured form offered by their domestic critics.

It was these shifting beliefs, not the details of military strategy, which proved decisive in the battle of the euromissiles. *War By Other Means* is a work in the liberal tradition of historiography in which individuals stand at the center of concern and in which the outcomes of events remain subject to chance, contingency and timing. This may sound terribly simplistic in the era of postmodernism, but the more elaborate theoretical replacements of human beings as historical actors leave me unconvinced. If Lukács, the Frankfurt School, Korsch, Merleau-Ponty, and Gramsci were right about the role of individuals and beliefs in politics, then there is no reason to limit these insights to the history of the revolutionary Left or to restrict them to the history of the first half of this century.

I leave it to readers to assess how my not at all hidden antagonism to communist dictatorship and the policies of the Soviet Union in the period in question influenced my selection and use of evidence. I make no apologies for my anti-communism, and suspect that many colleagues in Central and Eastern Europe who suffered under the dictatorships share my disgust and anger at the systems which have so belatedly collapsed. However pleased I am at the turn of events of the past few years, my historical assessment is that the collapse of communism, like the defeat of Nazism, or any other major event in history, was not inevitable, and certainly not when it happened. It took human beings to decide among difficult alternatives. *War By Other Means* is a history of this moment of praxis of great consequence. As such it may evoke more shared assumptions among readers of this journal than Peters' review would suggest.

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Reviews:

The Deconstruction of Tragedy

John Sallis, *Crossings: Nietzsche and the Space of Tragedy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 158 pp.

The Critique of Metaphysics

Metaphysics has fallen into disrepute. It has become so outmoded that it is only mentioned in terms of its critique. But behind this seemingly unanimous rejection lies a range of conflicting views of just what the target of the critique should be. The basic tenet is the inability of a concept to represent faithfully the thing to which it refers. For Nietzsche the target of attack is the presumption that truth lies within the concept rather than in the thing. Though his critique is an attempt to restrict the authority of conceptual analyses, the post-structuralist mobilization of this critique which Sallis undertakes turns it into its opposite. For Sallis it is not the concept which is to be attacked as metaphysical, but that which is prior to the concept.

The difference between Nietzsche's defense of the "primal unity" of things before their integration into a conceptual apparatus and Sallis' attempt to brand the primal unity as a metaphysical remnant to be cleansed from Nietzsche's thought marks the opposite aims of their two projects. Though both criticize the bond between claim and referent, they take opposite sides. Designating this bond as the metaphysical tie to be rejected in a critique of metaphysics, Nietzsche defends the autonomy of the pre-conceptual referent against the constant attempts of cognition to appropriate it. The relation of claim to referent is a relation between science and life, and the metaphysical bias to be criticized is the unwarranted belief in the ability of theoretical understanding to capture a truth which only exists in life. He disputes the theoretical comprehensibility of truth in order to limit the authority of the conceptual. Because science should serve life and not the other way around, the greatest danger in the assumption of a tie between cognition and truth is that the theoretical construction will replace life. Sallis' antagonism to any reality outside of a conceptual apparatus does away with the entire pre-conceptual realm. In spite of his rhetoric, Sallis' reading ends up supporting the very Enlightenment project Nietzsche attacked. The difference between their aims presents the first problem for Sallis' reading of Nietzsche. Attempting to defend that dimension of reality which is inaccessible to conceptual understanding, Nietzsche refers to it as "the primal unity" and the

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"inmost ground of the world."[1] Sallis understands these references as signs of a "metaphysical" tendency in Nietzsche's early work and seeks to reinterpret *The Birth of Tragedy* so as to eradicate this tendency. He describes his book as both a reading of *The Birth of Tragedy* "along the axis of the Heideggerian questions" and an attempt to oppose Heidegger's separation between the early metaphysical and the later Nietzsche who has "twisted free" of metaphysics (2-3). "Everything will depend on a certain spacing, on setting the Dionysian and, hence, tragedy apart from metaphysics, on resisting their assimilation specifically to Schopenhauer's metaphysics, which on the other hand, is indisputably reinscribed in Nietzsche's text" (52).

The fact that "Schopenhauer's metaphysics" is "indisputably reinscribed" forces Sallis to go to extraordinary lengths to prove his point. The textual linchpin of his argument consists of a set of posthumously published manuscripts and notes which he attempts to invoke against the repeated "metaphysical" references in *The Birth of Tragedy*. In these manuscripts dating from the 1867-1871 period immediately before the publication of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche criticizes Schopenhauer's equation of the will with the thing-in-itself: "The will is already a form of appearance."[2] Though this citation only demonstrates that Nietzsche disputed Schopenhauer's claim that the will is thing-in-itself rather than appearance, Sallis draws the unwarranted conclusion that "the very distinction between thing-in-itself and appearance is threatened" (66). This is a strange conclusion to reach, given Nietzsche's own statements about the matter in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Far from criticizing the distinction between thing-in-itself and appearance, Nietzsche, in a reference to Kant and Schopenhauer, celebrates Kant's separation of appearances from the things-in-themselves because the distinction undermines science's claim that it could make any statement about the "true essence of things" (*BT* 112). Science's loss of authority over this realm allows this realm to exist and develop independent of a scientific pre-determination of its contents.

While Nietzsche insists upon the distinction between thing-in-itself and appearance in order to preserve the pre-conceptual character of the thing-in-itself and limit the authority of the theoretical, Sallis tries to efface this distinction in order to cast Nietzsche as a destroyer of the pre-conceptual. In order to succeed he must interpret Nietzsche's constant references to "the primal unity" in such a way as to obliterate its independent existence. He does this by reading the primal unity as a "vacuous opposite" of cognizable appearances (71). On the basis of Nietzsche's critique of the idea that the will is the thing-in-itself, he declares that "what is called — improperly — *the primal one* (*das Ureine* [sic]) must

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967), pp. 49, 38. Henceforth referred in text as "BT," followed by page number.

2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. by Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1967-1977), Vol. 7, p. 203. Quoted in Sallis, p. 67.

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be drawn back into the domain of appearances, redrawn there as the figure of dissolution of the limits determining individuals" (71). Whereas Nietzsche shuts the primal unity out of the domain of appearances in order to preserve its existence as an independent entity, irreducible to the laws of cognition, Sallis's description of it as a dissolution of limits, an absence, implies that anything inaccessible to cognitive understanding is non-existent.

Sallis' refusal to acknowledge Nietzsche's attempt to defend the pre-conceptual leads him to collapse the contradictions Nietzsche describes as part of the world into the model of Derridean "erasure," a process which occurs solely within a text. For Sallis, the primary conflict in *The Birth of Tragedy* is between the positive valorization of aesthetics and the fact that Nietzsche wrote a philosophical text. He interprets Nietzsche's defense of art as an attack on philosophy and religion as such, citing Nietzsche's critique of Socrates (15). Yet, it is not theory as such that Nietzsche opposes. Just as he disapproves of Euripidean tragedy as too Socratic, he approves of the philosophy of Heraclitus as well as of the form and function of pre-Socratic philosophy as a whole. What he opposes in his criticism of Socrates is the idea that truth is something which can be theoretically understood and that a theoretical apprehension of truth will automatically result in progress toward the good. (*BT*, 91) As opposed to the Socratic notion of truth as eternal form, Nietzsche refers to Heraclitus in order to advance a notion of truth as an ever-changing flux which cannot be grasped properly by cognitive categories.

Based on this opposition between the flux of truth and the rigidity of the conceptual, Nietzsche rejects in his later work the validity of the distinction between thing-in-itself and appearance, but not because no pre-conceptual realm can exist other than as an abyss — Sallis' reasoning — but rather because the distinction reinforces the tendency to conceive of the thing-in-itself in cognitive categories of constancy and permanency. Because the very concept of a thing is already a reification of a dynamic life process into a cognitive category, the idea of a thing-in-itself already presupposes that which it must exclude. The tendency is to speak of the thing-in-itself in terms of a fixed entity rather than a flux, a process of becoming. Recognizing this world of the inconstant and the dynamic as the truth behind the fixed forms constructed by the intellect, Nietzsche declares truth to be something temporary, and rejects the Kantian distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, not because it maintains the independence of the thing-in-itself, but because it limits this independence by predetermining the world of flux as split into discrete things.[3] Consequently, Nietzsche replaces the distinction between thing-in-itself and appearance with the distinction between the Socratic and the Dionysian.

This distinction sets up the issues in Nietzsche's critique of metaphysics. In his attempt to defend the pre-conceptual, he moves beyond this distinction

5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans, by Walter Kaufman and . J. Hollindale (New York, 1968), pp. 300-302.

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in order to differentiate between two attitudes toward the world which Adorno would later describe as the rational and the mimetic. While the Socratic approach to apprehend rationally the world of objects with concepts, the Dionysian aesthetic attitude imagines the world in its primal state before the introduction of concepts and of the subject/object split. The project of *The Birth of Tragedy* is to determine the preconditions and parameters of this Dionysian attitude.

The original manifestation of the Dionysian is in nature. Nature provides the best example of a primal state in which no object distinctions exist but in which this lack of cognitive categories does not mean a situation of total chaos. Nature itself contains the two aesthetic forces which the human artist must imitate.[4] Nietzsche designates these two art forces as the Apollonian and Dionysian, corresponding to Adorno's distinction between semblance and expression as the imperatives determining the work of art.[5] While Apollo maintains the separation between the work of art and reality, Dionysus is the route through which an outside reality enters the work of art. The Apollonian is the representative aspect of art which, in creating a pictorial image of an object in reality, maintains art as an imitation of the real world and not itself part of the real world. The Dionysian is the formal, musical aspect of the work of art which does not represent anything but attempts to be an element of reality in a state of non-objectification. Though Nietzsche connects the Apollonian to sculpture and the Dionysian to music, both art forces exist in constant conflict in every aesthetic object.

The task of art for Nietzsche is in the end a Dionysian one — to transcend its own semblance in order to enact in reality the return of objects to their primal non-objectified state. "In the first place, as a Dionysian artist he [the lyricist] has identifed himself with the primal unity, its pain and contradiction. Assuming that music has been correctly termed a repetition and a recast of the world, we may say that he produces the copy of this primal unity as music" (*BT*, 49). The Dionysian artist's loss of subjectivity is compensated by his communion with the primal unity, and the work of art, as an imitation of this unity, is as real as the world, a second manifestation of reality.

This primal state can only be achieved through a suspension of the subject/object distinction whose annihilation of the individual opens up the living reality behind all objectification. "For it is only in particular examples of such annihilation that we see clearly the eternal phenomenon of Dionysian art, which gives expression to the will in its omnipotence, as it were, behind the *principium individuationis*, the eternal life beyond all phenomena, and despite all annihilation"

4. "Thus far we have considered the Apollonian and its opposite, the Dionysian, as artistic energies which burst forth from nature herself, *without the mediation of the human artist* . . . With reference to these immediate art-states of nature, every artist is an 'imitator,' . . ." Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, op. cit.*, p. 38.

5. Cf. Theodor W. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1973) (1970), pp. 154-79. Cf. also Robert Hullot-Kentor, "The Impossibility of Music: Adorno, Popular and Other Music," in *Telos* 87 (Spring 1991), pp. 97-117, for an excellent discussion of this opposition.

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(*BT*, 104). But whereas Nietzsche's discussion of the annihilation of the individual emphasizes the "eternal life beyond all phenomena," Sallis describes only the dissolution of the individual: "The Dionysian state is one of being impelled beyond the limit, driven on beyond the very limit that would delimit every state of the individual" (54). While Nietzsche attempts to defend the Dionysian against the Socratic, Sallis' rational understanding of the non-identical equates it with a vacuum in order to interpret the Dionysian in Nietzsche's thought as the symbol of this vacuum. Just as the concept of the thing-in-itself reifies the pre-conceptual by carving it up into distinct objects, Sallis' reduction of Dionysian flux to a dissolution of limits only manages to preserve a reified version of flux. Meanwhile the separation of the Dionysian from a pre-conceptual and therefore "metaphysical" reality and its reduction to a dissolution preserves the all-encompassing power of the concept: "there can be transgressive disruption of the limit only if the limit is also redrawn, reinstated, as the very limit to be transgressed" (55). Sallis' method of placing boundaries "under erasure" does not even admit the possibility of real dissolution. Denying that cognitive boundaries can ever be wiped out simply because the boundary always reappears as the semantic designation of what has happened, Sallis not only denies the reality of the living realm which Nietzsche sees behind this breakdown but also necessarily the reality of the breakdown itself. This inability to conceive of the reality of a breakdown of cognitive boundaries is the corollary to Sallis' refusal to recognize the independent reality of a pre-conceptual realm. The interpretation of the Dionysian as a momentary transgression of boundaries resulting in an immediate reinstatement leads to a reimposition of the laws of cognition, this time without any metaphysical grounding to be sure, but grounded just as firmly by the meaninglessness of real dissolution and the consequent necessity of a conceptual order. In his drive to "discern the capacity of the Dionysian to resist stabilization along the metaphysical axis" (54) Sallis must eradicate any independent force which does not arise from the cognitive plane. His "non-metaphysical" understanding of the Dionysian, in reconstructing the flux of life as a cognitive play of boundaries, reifies the living dimension in the attempt to reproduce its vitality on the level of the concept.

Apollo and Dionysus

By recasting the pre-conceptual as an abyss, Sallis also undermines the distinction between Apollo and Dionysus. He understands the Dionysian as an imitation of the abyss in the same way that the Apollonian is an imitation of appearance. According to this interpretation, the function of the tragedy is to create first a "Dionysian mimesis" of the "abyss" and then to represent this abyss in the form of an Apollonian image (89-90). Because the chorus imitates the abyss and the actors then imitate the chorus' imitation, Sallis characterizes the tragedy as a "double mimesis of the Dionysian" (91). Instead of emphasizing the difference between Apollonian and Dionysian, he collapses both into the same "mimetic" structure. But because he fails to differentiate properly the

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Apollonian from the Dionysian, both forces function with the Apollonian goal of presenting images which are imitations of reality.

Although his method collapses the Dionysian with the Apollonian in its description of their formal characteristics, Sallis denies this by maintaining a differentiation between the Apollonian and the Dionysian in terms of contents. Whereas the Apollonian consists of a mimesis of boundaries, the Dionysian consists of a mimesis of the breakdown of boundaries. This emphasis on contents, though it runs in contradiction to Sallis' anti-metaphysical rhetoric eschewing a direct relation between a sign and its contents, forms an essential part of his method. Throughout the book he considers Nietzsche's text not as a field of relations and tensions between mutually defining terms, but as a series of essential concepts to be described: "Apollo," "Dionysus," "Tragedy," and "Socrates" being the names of the four chapters in his book. In contrast, Nietzsche himself never offers a straight description of any of the terms he uses. The Apollonian and the Dionysian are discussed, not as two separate entities but as an opposition, and the section concerning Socrates, originally entitled "Socrates and Greek Tragedy," also discusses a relation rather than two discrete entities.

Contradicting Nietzsche's own interpretation in claiming the centrality of *The Bacchae* for an understanding of the Dionysian and in seeking Dionysus in the drama where he is most directly present, Sallis nevertheless attempts to suppress through a creative manipulation of citations his own antagonism to Nietzsche's text. He cites from *The Birth of Tragedy* in order to support his connection between *The Bacchae* and the Dionysian: "Not that Dionysus is simply and directly represented in this drama: not only does the dark background hymned by the chorus permeate the entire drama, but also, even on the stage, there is still a certain play of masks by which, as Nietzsche says in general, 'the god who appears speaks and acts so as to resemble an erring, striving, suffering individual.' Yet, in *The Bacchae* this difference is posed most transparently, and the very movement of the play is toward its utter effacement, toward the revelation that the Bacchic Stranger is none other than Dionysus himself (43). In stating that "in general" Dionysus appears in the mask of a struggling individual in the play, Sallis denies that Dionysus is directly represented in *The Bacchae*. Yet this denial of direct representation is reversed by the end of the paragraph which reveals that "the Bacchic Stranger is none other than Dionysus himself." In putting direct representation "under erasure," Sallis is able to deny it for a moment only in order to affirm it all the more emphatically in the end for his method. Moreover, in enlisting the Nietzsche citation to support his point that Dionysus must also appear in *The Bacchae* behind a mask, he fails to cite at that point the beginning of Nietzsche's paragraph where he states "that until Euripides, Dionysus never ceased to be the tragic hero; that all the celebrated figures of the Greek stage — Prometheus, Oedipus, etc. — are mere masks of this original hero, Dionysus" (*BT*, 73). While for Nietzsche this masked appearance of Dionysus (*BT*, 75) may be true "in general" for Greek tragedy, it is not true in the specific case of Euripides. In addition to explicitly addressing Euripides as the abandoner of

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Dionysus Nietzsche refers not to Euripidian characters as masks of Dionysus but to Prometheus and Oedipus, where the connection to Dionysus is much less direct and, at first glance, less comprehensible than Sallis' choice of the Bacchic stranger, but ultimately more consistent with a method which avoids direct representation.[6]

The use of Euripides to demonstrate the Dionysian, puzzling as it seems in light of Nietzsche's text, once again reveals Sallis' true loyalties. In spite of his apparent attack on Socrates, Sallis' foregrounding of Euripides points toward a shared affinity with Socrates. The Socratic impulse in Euripides denies the existence of the Dionysian as an independent force, interpreting it instead as a lack of knowledge. It is this Socratic perspective, connecting truth with philosophical cognition, which condemns the Dionysian in Aeschylus and Sophocles for its incomprehensibility and incommensurability. Whereas pre-Euripidian tragedy is a Dionysian mimesis which opens up the drama to the antinomies of experience, the Euripidian tragedy is a theoretical, cognitive representation with a critical purpose. *The Bacchae*, in spite of its depiction of the "victory" of Dionysus, maintains a Socratic viewpoint; first, in its attempt to directly depict the Dionysian at all, thereby reifying it into a distinct entity; second, in its construction of the Dionysian as barbaric and chaotic. Sallis' description of the Dionysian as an "abyss" correlates with the Socratic designation of the Dionysian as the embodiment of meaninglessness and chaos.

For Nietzsche, the challenge in *The Birth of Tragedy* is to conceive of the Dionysian as a mimesis of the primal unity which is both impossible to depict directly in the tragedy and yet present. Instead of seeking a direct presentation of the god Dionysus as Sallis does with *The Bacchae*, Nietzsche describes the Dionysian in the work of art as the work's attempt to itself imitate in its form "the primordial contradiction and primordial pain in the heart of the primal unity" (*BT*, 55). Because this primal unity does not exist as a thing in the world, an imitation of it cannot consist of a direct representation of empirical reality. Instead Nietzsche explains Dionysian mimesis as "musical dissonance" (*BT*, 141) in a work of art. Because music has no empirical original, it provides the model for a purity of form whose dissonance imports into the work of art that which cannot be directly represented — in this case the primal unity which does not exist in reality. He explains this dissonance in terms of drama with the statement that

6. In another citation Sallis uses to support his point, he attempts to demonstrate that, even though Euripides rejected Dionysus according to Nietzsche, the victory of Dionysus in *The Bacchae* represented a "return of the repressed" (Sallis, *op. cit.*, p. 43) and an example of Dionysian art. Yet Nietzsche makes clear that "when the poet recanted, his tendency had already triumphed. Dionysus had already been scared from the tragic stage, by a demonic power speaking through Euripides" (*The Birth of Tragedy*, *op. cit.*, p. 82) Though it is clear that Euripides presents Dionysus in *The Bacchae*, this presentation cannot reverse the structural transformation of the tragedy that Euripides had carried out. "Even Euripides was, in a sense, only a mask: the deity that spoke through him was neither Dionysus nor Apollo, but an altogether newborn demon, called *Socrates*" (*Ibid.*).

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"[t]he structure of the scenes and the visual images reveal a deeper wisdom than the poet himself can put into words and concepts . . ." (*BT*, 105). The Dionysian aspect is produced by the structure of the drama and not by any character or concept which is directly presented. Nietzsche's example is the work of Aeschylus, where, in *Prometheus Bound*, the Dionysian expresses itself as a dialectical contradiction between Prometheus' "superior wisdom" and the fact that he must atone for this wisdom "with eternal suffering" (*BT*, 70). This formal conflict within the drama enacts in its structure that which it cannot depict in its images. In freeing art from the imitation of empirical reality, the purity of form carried into the tragedy through myth is not arbitrary in its integration of a reality outside the work. Nietzsche specifically states that the formal structure enacts "the contradiction in the heart of the world" (*BT*, 71). By demonstrating a tension between wisdom and happiness and setting the drama in opposition to the Socratic view which would harmonize the two, the Prometheus myth mediates nature not as harmony but as a fundamental contradiction between human aspiration and the limits set by nature.

Though Nietzsche, at least in the *Birth of Tragedy*, has not yet developed an adequate terminology for describing the non-identical, the object prior to objectification, and refers to it as a primal unity, seemingly prior to all history, his reading of *Prometheus Bound* demonstrates the relation of the primordial to historical experience. The tie between wisdom and suffering expressed in the formal structure of *Prometheus Bound* has its origins in the philosophical problem which accompanies man's progress in subduing nature: "The presupposition of the Prometheus myth is to be found in the extravagant value which a naive humanity attached to *fire* as the true palladium of every ascending culture. But that man should freely dispose of fire without receiving it as a present from heaven, either as a lightning bolt or as the warming rays of the sun, struck these reflective primitive men as sacrilege, as a robbery of divine nature. Thus the very first philosophical problem immediately produces a painful and irresolvable contradiction between man and god and moves it before the gate of every culture, like a huge boulder. The best and highest possession mankind can acquire is obtained by sacrilege and must be paid for with consequences that involve the whole flood of sufferings and sorrows with which the offended divinities have to afflict the nobly aspiring race of men" (*BT*, 71). The connection between wisdom and suffering in *Prometheus Bound* arises from the guilt and sense of sacrilege which followed the discovery of fire and which were then transmitted through the generations in the structure of the Prometheus myth. The structure of the myth recapitulates the structure of experience, and the "primordial pain" expressed in the myth is a mimesis through form of the ancient Greek experience of nature. In spite of Nietzsche's abstract references to a primal unity, his specific reading of Greek drama demonstrates that the Dionysian is related to specific events in human development whose consequences for the psyche are expressed in the structure of myth. The significance of the myth would then be dependent upon the repetition of this event in a community's history, and differences in the

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structure of a community's experience correspond to changes in the structure of that community's myths. It is here, in Nietzsche's method, not in the critique of Schopenhauer which Sallis cites, that one can find the seeds of Nietzsche's later shift away from the references to a primal unity in *The Birth of Tragedy*. The psychological and historical explanation places the "true essence of things" in the realm of appearances, making unnecessary the idea of a primal unity which exists before appearances. Instead this primal unity corresponds to the condition of appearances before their subjugation to the concept.

The Dionysian in Nietzsche's philosophy must be understood as the attempt to relate to nature prior to the subject/object split predicated by the concept. Instead of a rational fixation of the non-identical as a vacuum which can then be colonized, Nietzsche's description of the Dionysian corresponds to Adorno's idea of mimesis: "The mimesis of works of art is similarity with oneself."[7] Such mimesis allows the work of art to resemble an object as it exists before the subject/object split which turned it into an object. It resembles itself, prior to any conceptual pre-determination.

Art and Myth

This reinterpretation of the primal unity, moving it into the realm of appearances, without destroying its pre-conceptual quality, leaves a structural homology between the experience of the pre-conceptual and the experience of the absolute. Nietzsche refers to this similarity by noting the inseparability of music from myth.[8] Because structure provides the entrance in both music and myth for that which cannot be represented directly, musical dissonance is also the model for the structure of myth. The inseparability of the two suggests that any mimesis of nature is simultaneously an internalization of the limits that nature sets upon human aspiration. The conflict between man and nature connects mimesis to dissonance and necessitates the mythic function of art as that which justifies the existence of the world in spite of nature's limits on human activity.

Adorno rejects the necessity of this "primordial contradiction" between man and nature and sees art's mimesis of nature not as an imitation of this contradiction but as a projection of a state of reconciliation.[9] Locating the source of discord in the concept and not in the limits set by nature, he distinguishes between

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7. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

8. "Music and tragic myth are equally expressions of the Dionysian capacity of a people, and they are inseparable. Both derive from a sphere of art that lies beyond the Apollonian; both transfigure a region in whose joyous chords dissonance as well as the terrible image of the world fade away charmingly; both play with the sting of displeasure, trusting in their exceedingly powerful magic arts; and by means of this play both justify the existence of even the 'worst world'."Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy, op. cit.*, p. 143.

21. "The aesthetic unity of the manifold appears as if it had not done any violence to this manifold, but had been divined from the manifold itself. The repressive unity, which is also the source of discord, is thus transformed into reconciliation . . ." Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

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art, which maintains the possibility of reconciliation by negatively depicting it as that which is beyond the concept, and myth, which rejects this possibility by emphasizing the inescapability of natural limits. He justifies this distinction by denying that myth contains an inner aesthetic form. He reserves Dionysian mimesis through form for art and imputes to myth an Apollonian mode of representation which directly symbolizes the absolute. For Adorno, while the work of art subordinates itself to its own irreality by means of its formal law,[10] myth claims to be a direct depiction of "being in a higher realm."[11] But as Nietzsche's reading of the Prometheus myth demonstrates, myth does not represent the absolute as an Apollonian symbol but as a Dionysian formal structure. By failing to note the importance of formal structure for myth, Adorno also overlooks the specific way in which myth cites the absolute. The religious aspect of the cult object does not inhere within the object but, like the non-identical in the work of art, is set up by a mimetic relation to the absolute as that which is absent in the image and must be extrapolated as a projection out of the form. The absolute itself does not exist in the myth but in the current beliefs of the collective within which it appears. To the extent that they tell stories, myths are an imitation of real experience. The truth of a mythic story is not a given, but depends upon the extent to which the structures of experience imbedded in its form still retain validity for the collective. Because the binding quality of a myth lives and dies according to its actual relation to the community's experience (as Adorno himself shows in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*), the formal structure of the myth is no different than Adorno's conception of the work of art. The power of myth, as of art, depends upon its ability to adjust to changes in the character of collective experience. In addition to providing the dimension of experience which gives meaning to the form of the myth, the collective also determines the social function of the myth. Though Adorno recognizes the collective as the source of the formal structure which mediates expression in works of art,[12] he denies the relation to the collective in the reception of the work of art by seeing inner form as a guarantor of the work's hermetic character.

Whereas Nietzsche, at least in the *Birth of Tragedy*, cannot speak of the non-identical, the object prior to objectification, without speaking of it as the primal unity, artificially fixing the meaning of the myth in a realm prior to experience, Adorno can only discuss the experience of the non-identical in terms of the hermetic work of art, isolating experience from society. This retreat of mimesis into the work of art is a consequence of the totally administered world thesis, according to which outside the work of art only reification is possible. Because reification has become a second nature, mimesis in modernity has to be a mimesis of reification. The goal of modern mimesis is no longer to reveal the horror of nature but the loss of this horror. Yet the idea that nature has been totally

10. *Ibid.*, p. 133-34.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 159.
12. *Ibid.*, pp.132-33.

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eradicated is already a capitulation before reification. Adorno's description of a progression from mimesis of nature in myth to mimesis of reification in art is merely a more historical form of Sallis' banning of nature into the abyss. Whereas for Sallis nature never existed, for Adorno nature has been consumed by reification and no longer exists in the modern world. Since mimesis can only make sense as a mimesis of nature, Adorno's presumption that only the concept exists as a force in reality ends with the reified presentation of the non-identical within the work of art. Because the non-identical cannot inhere within the work as a fixed entity, it can only exist as that which transcends the immanent hermetic character of the work. While Adorno confines mimesis to the hermetic work of art, isolating and thus reifying both, for Nietzsche mimesis does not simply exist as semblance, but also as social practice.

Mimesis in Society

Such mimesis as practice is Nietzsche's primary concern in *The Birth of Tragedy*. Referring to art as "the highest task and the truly metaphysical activity of this life" (*BT*, 32), his discussion of artistic form merges with a discussion of religious entities, the gods Apollo and Dionysus, in such a way as to emphasize the primary role of art in the constitution of social experience out of the relation between man and nature. Artistic forms, and not theoretical constructs, mediate the relation between man and nature in such a way as to set up a mimetic as opposed to a rational relation between the two. The move from a rational, controlling relation to nature to a mimetic relation is simultaneously an acceptance of the limits of knowledge and the power of nature. This acceptance coincides with the need to construct a justification of the world in spite of the pain inherent to it. Noting that a set of values cannot be justified rationally, as an attempt to overcome the power of nature, but only aesthetically, as a recognition of this power, Nietzsche constructs a "metaphysics of art" in which "existence and the world seemed justified only as an aesthetic phenomenon" (*BT*, 141).

The understanding of art as metaphysical activity determines Nietzsche's foregrounding of the chorus as the primary element in Greek tragedy. The chorus acts as the mediator of a transcendent spiritual experience for the audience, abrogating social divisions in order to create a unified community. The opposition between Apollo and Dionysus is not just one between two conceptions of art but between two structures of society. Whereas Apollonian art is based on imitation and representation, Dionysian art is based on transformation and understood as metaphysical activity. The abrogation of social divisions depends on the chorus' ability to create a Dionysian experience of community by transcending the tragedy's Apollonian character, its autonomous status as a hermetic work which in representing the non-identical in art, reifies it in society. This community is the result of a mimesis of nature in which the artificial social boundaries constructed by culture are transcended. This mimesis occurs not just in the work of art, but as an attitude of the entire audience. Though a drama would normally be considered an example of Apollonian art because it enacts

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an imitation of human events on the level of "Apollonian appearances" (*BT*, 66) the chorus transforms the tragedy into a Dionysian experience by creating a situation in which "the gulfs between man and man give way to an overwhelming feeling of unity leading back to the very heart of nature"(*BT*, 59). This unity is enacted not just as a representation but as a metaphysical activity in which the entire audience participates: "a whole throng experiences the magic of this transformation" (*BT*, 64). The Dionysian does not appear as a representation in the drama, but as a real experience of transformation.

The goal of this transformation is the replacement of the "man of culture" by the Satyr chorus. "Nature, as yet unchanged by knowledge, with the bolts of culture still unbroken — that is what the Greek saw in his satyr who nevertheless was not a mere ape. On the contrary, the satyr was the archetype of man, the embodiment of his highest and most intense emotions . . ." (*BT*, 61). The transformation performed by the satyr chorus is not a regression but a return of humans to themselves prior to the alienating structures of "culture." Nor is this mimesis of nature harmony. It is a dissonance arising out of the contradictions of experience set by the relation between man and nature. The "man of culture" does not recognize any reality outside of a static culture which artificially fixes the identities of its members. "The contrast between this real truth of nature and the lie of culture that poses as if it were the only reality is similar to that between the eternal core of things, the thing-in-itself, and the whole world of appearances" (*BT*, 61). Just as the issue in the discussion of the thing-in-itself and appearances was the preservation of the independence of the thing-in-itself, the issue here is the preservation of an organic community against the predations of "the lie of culture" which not only attempts to divide the community into separate constituencies but also presents these divisions as the only reality. According to the man of culture, the abrogation of these divisions, if possible, would be a regression into chaos. Against this view, the chorus, by becoming one with the audience, transcends these divisions to create a unified community. The transcendental character of the tragedy thus lies in the experience of the collective itself as it defends itself against outside determinations of its identity — not in any universal schema set up by the myth or an over-arching civilization.

Against Nietzsche's description of Dionysian transformation, Sallis' explanation of the appearance of the Dionysian in tragedy coincides with the man of culture's attempt to neutralize the Dionysian by means of an Apollonian aesthetic. Sallis himself goes no farther than to characterize the tragedy as a Dionysian mimesis of the abyss, but the social consequences of his argument are made clear in Sloterdijk's 1986 book on *The Birth of Tragedy*. Though Sallis himself does not mention this book, it is important for his analysis because Sloterdijk, starting from a similar understanding of the Apollo/Dionysus opposition, draws the conclusions which are implicit but hidden in Sallis' analysis.

Sloterdijk shares Sallis' understanding of the Dionysian as a symbol of an unattainable abyss. The difference is that Sloterdijk does not speak in the abstract terms of "abyss" and "dissolution," but rather replaces them with the

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more sociological "Dionysian throngs." He claims that "Nietzsche separates before our eyes the Dionysian throng into two strictly differentiated, almost opposed, choruses which stand in relation to one another like culture and nature or civilization and barbarism."[13] While the barbarian Dionysus enacts a real Dionysian "regression" into animality, the Greek Dionysus only enacts a representation of a regression. Because Sloterdijk overlooks the possibility of a specifically Dionysian form of art which would not be a mere copy of reality, he equates the barbarian Dionysian throngs with the true Dionysus. According to this interpretation there is an inconsistency between Nietzsche's description of the original Dionysian as a utopian state at the end of section one in *The Birth of Tragedy*[14] and the later description of the barbarian Dionysian festivals as a "horrible 'witches brew' of sensuality and cruelty" (*BT*, 40). Whereas Sloterdijk sees in Nietzsche a wavering between a positive and a negative assessment of the original Dionysian, a closer reading of Nietzsche's text reveals that the two assessments actually apply to two different forms of the Dionysian. Nietzsche differentiates between the Dionysian as an "immediate art-state of nature" and the artistic imitation of this art-state. According to this differentiation, both the Greek Dionysus and the barbarian Dionysus are imitations of the original Dionysian, which is an artistic energy bursting forth "from nature herself." The utopian description is of Dionysus as natural art-state, while the negative description is of the barbarian imitation of this natural art-state (*BT*, 38). According to this differentiation, both Greek Dionysus and the barbarian Dionysus are imitations of the original, which is an artistic energy bursting forth "from nature herself" (*BT*, 38). The utopian description is of Dionysus as natural art-state while the negative description is of the barbarian imitation of this natural art-state. Nietzsche's distinction between barbarian and Greek forms of Dionysus is not a description of successive stages of development — he also praises the Greek incarnation of Dionysus above modern ones — but an attempt to differentiate between alternative expressions of the original Dionysian art-state. By equating Dionysus as natural art-state with the barbarian Dionysus, Sloterdijk demonizes the Dionysian just as effectively as Sallis does with his equation of the Dionysian with the abyss. The effect in both cases is to deny the possibility of a specifically Dionysian form of art whose function is to present neither a copy of the abyss of meaninglessness nor a "sanitized" copy of real Dionysian festivals but a copy of Dionysus as natural art-state, a mimesis of nature.

Taking sides against nature and in defense of culture, Sloterdijk presents this distinction between Dionysus in reality and Dionysus in art, corresponding to Sallis' differentiation between the abyss and the Dionysian mimesis of the abyss, as a progression from the barbarian to the civilized, the Apollonian restriction of the Dionysian within the boundaries of the work of art being the

15. Peter Sloterdijk, *Der Denker auf der Bühne: Nietzsches Materialismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), p. 60.

16. Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy*, *op. cit.*, p. 37. Cited in Sloterdijk, *op. cit.*, p. 60-61.

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"primal scene of civilization,"[15] and the original Dionysian festivals being a lost state of nature which can only reemerge as a kind of fascist frenzy which must be avoided at all costs. Sloterdijk argues that the structure of the tragedy is and must be an Apollonian one which allows a "Dionysian outburst" only to the extent that it occurs within the "quotation marks" of an Apollonian artistic semblance.[16] His fear of the Dionysian throngs leads him to place them under the control of Apollonian wardens.

This demonization of the "throngs" is a justification of the attempt to penetrate and control them in order to fit them into intellectual conceptions of how they should behave. According to Sallis and Sloterdijk, the chaotic masses depend upon the Apollonian artist and the Socratic intellectual in order to maintain any existence at all. Just as Sallis interprets the Dionysian as an abyss, Sloterdijk rejects the possibility of Dionysian experience, arguing that the Dionysian cannot be had in reality but "only in the image — in the imaginary mode of representation. . . . Dionysus cannot be had, and what allows itself to be had is not Dionysus."[17] Stating that the only possible appearance of the Dionysian is as a representation within the Apollonian theater, Sloterdijk then goes on to equate this theatrical "Dionysian in place of the Dionysian, unification in place of unification,"[18] with philosophy, which also demonstrates this structure of replacement by replacing the thing with the concept.[19] Though this final equation of the Dionysian with philosophy conflicts with Sallis' stated attempt to separate the two, Sloterdijk's conclusions are actually more consistent with Sallis' interpretation of the Dionysian as abyss than Sallis' own and indicate Sallis' own affinity with the Socratic.

Because both Sallis and Sloterdijk see the Apollonian as form and the Dionysian as a lack of form, the oppositions which Nietzsche outlines between Apollo and Dionysus and between Socrates and tragedy must collapse in their accounts. The Dionysian becomes the Apollonian, the tragic becomes the Socratic, and Nietzschean philosophy becomes an alibi for the intellectual's penetration of the community. The post-structuralist account of Nietzsche reveals itself to be an Enlightenment prioritization of science and progress over life.

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15. Sloterdijk, *op. cit.*, p. 64.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 54.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 70.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 66.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 116.

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A Matter of Tradition

Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, the Persistance of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1990), 270 pp. + x.

The richness of a work is often indicated by the number of heterogeneous reinterpretations it is able to generate. Certainly Adorno's work has inspired many different readings, and it is no surprise that his thought has been (re) discovered most recently by postmodernists, who tend to fashion Adorno as postmodern *avant la lettre*. More specifically, it is his critique of the subject — individual or collective — as the agent of social transformation which has attracted postmodernists. In this context Fredrich Jameson's *Late Marxism* is doubly useful. It measures the legitimacy of the latest appropriation of Adorno and, in the course of the analysis, provides a commentary on and critique of postmodernism. But this usefulness has a price — namely, the acceptance of the whole. Jameson stresses that his project is itself subject to the general law it articulates: no valid particular without the universal. The whole Jameson wishes to defend is the dialectic. In the introduction he declares: "So the deeper message of my book, at the level at which Adorno himself in his particularity becomes indistinguishable from the dialectic, has to do with the celebration of dialectic as such" (11). The sentence seals the victory of dialectics as that figure of thought which allows the particular (Adorno's dialectic) to vanish into the universal (the dialectic as such). Jameson's dense prose, with its admirable ability to mobilize concepts usually regarded as incompatible with Marxism, tends to obscure such unrestrained candor.[1] This early moment of clarity, however, as univocal as similar passages he affords toward the end, outlines Jameson's engagement with Adorno's texts: they are the stage for the unfolding of a dialectical drama.

The chapters go on to demonstrate that dramatization is indeed a privileged notion, with the help of which Jameson can dissolve even Adorno's most particular (and most stubborn) traits into the all encompassing flow of dialectical thought. Thus, e.g., the precarious opinions Adorno held *vis-à-vis* politically committed art or his refusal to see any critical potential in popular culture are minor obstacles, easily overcome by this dialectical *tour de force*. Jameson argues that ". . . these positions of Adorno — so easily reducible to 'elitist' opinions. . . — are probably better *dramatized* as moves against a variety of other imaginary or ideal-typical protagonists. . . . The various positions become characters and

1. See Terry Eagleton's somewhat apologetic essay, "Fredric Jameson: The Politics of Style," in *Diacritics* 12 (Winter 1982), pp. 14-22.

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their *abstract ballet* turns out to be transferable to areas very different from art" (134, emphasis added). As the choreographer of this ballet, Jameson seeks to relocate Adorno within the Marxist tradition. The challenge is to detect the materialist foundations of Adorno's thought precisely where they seem most distant. However, the victorious dialectic that Jameson wishes to celebrate threatens his own project: never has Adorno looked more profoundly Hegelian than in Jameson's attempt to return him to the forefront of contemporary Marxist theory. Jameson's transformation of Adorno's known vices — idealist residues, the insistence on the concept, even the supposedly elitist construction of modern art — into Marxist virtues implies that Marxist thought cannot sever its roots in Hegel.[2]

Nevertheless, Jameson's book raises the question of whether such a (re)turn to idealism and philosophy is all that unfortunate if it is accompanied by the return to intellectual rigor. Is rigorous materialist thought impossible without recourse to the very idealist tradition it criticizes? Since, as Jameson realizes, any attempt to break with tradition is doomed to failure, the decisive questions become how the recourse to the past occurs and why it is necessary. Any critique of Jameson's particular version of a return of (or to) tradition can be credible only if it proceeds immanently, judging Jameson's project first of all by its own standards. The following discussion of *Late Marxism* focuses on two major questions: first, the particular temporality operative in Jameson's notion of dialectic; second, his emphasis on representation. Jameson's failure to adhere to the terms of his own critique can then perhaps provide the occasion for an alternative attempt to deal with the question of tradition.

Any critique of *Late Marxism* requires at least provisional acceptance of Jameson's privileging of the whole — a condition reinforced by the book's very structure; *Late Marxism* is not a loose collection of essays but a tightly knit construction. The three sections ("Baleful Enchantments of the Concept," "The Parable of the Oarsmen," "Productivities of the Monad") and their short dense subsections consciously reflect the organizational principle of Adorno's own *Negative Dialectic*, and the overall project invokes comparisons with Adorno's *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*. Adorno's infamous prose style (celebrated by Jameson in a note on the translations) is often at least matched by the familiar complexities of Jameson's writing. Such instances of mimesis are, however, intended to address the methodological dilemma of "how we are to engage a living thought that is no longer historically current" (7). Jameson speaks of "a kind of 'preestablished harmony' between Adorno's own modernism and the approach I am proposing" (11) — a euphemistic reformulation of what Adorno once called the inevitably complicitious relation of any critique with its proposed objects, cultural criticism being the paradigmatic

2. The book ends with the prospect of a Hegel-renaissance: "[A]ny number of straws in the wind point to an impending Hegel revival, of a new kind, likely to draw a revival of Capital-logic along with it. . . ." (241).

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case. Adorno provides Jameson with something of a "metacommentary" to his own work, and Adorno's thought presents the stage upon which Jameson acts out his own theories. This "preestablished harmony" is in turn inscribed in the larger context of the status of Marxism (or, as Jameson frequently insists, of the Marxisms) "in our own period . . . in which late capitalism has all but succeeded in eliminating the final loopholes of nature and the Unconscious, of subversion and the aesthetic, of individual and collective praxis alike, and, with a final fillip, of eliminating any memory trace of what thereby no longer existed in the henceforth postmodern landscape" (5).

In a review of the *Political Unconscious*, Samuel Weber aptly characterized Jameson's efforts as an attempt to increase Marxism's value in a market of competing models of interpretation by including and thus neutralizing potential competitors.[3] Postmodernism, however, previously defined by Jameson as the culture of consumer or late capitalism,[4] is evidently not so easily reconcilable with a Marxist position since he challenges some of the essential assumptions of Western Marxist aesthetics. Jameson's subtle strategy in *Late Marxism* is, therefore, to trade on the convergences between postmodernism and Adorno's thought while emphasizing the differences. Adorno is the Trojan horse that Jameson sends into the postmodern city. Exploiting the attraction of Adorno's works for postmodernism, he reintroduces classical dialectical thought in fashionable disguise. This strategy implies the acceptance of the standard of Adorno's own thinking, and Jameson performs the task well up to a point, i.e., up to the point where his rigor reveals itself as a dogmatism *contre coeur* — a profoundly unhegelian dogmatism resting on an opposition of universal and particular that engenders dialectical thought without being affected by it. From the start Jameson regards the three books he discusses (*Negative Dialectic*, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* and *Aesthetic Theory*) "as parts of a single unfolding system" (3). He pays little attention to other writings, and does not allow for qualitative differences between the texts. The acrobatic dialectic Jameson performs on, in between and sometimes at the cost of Adorno's texts is rigidly framed by this exclusion of heterogeneity. This dogmatism is the curious flipside of a relativism where everything is possible because the dialectic rules magnificently, turning everything upside down and inside out. The price to be paid for the employment of 'useful arguments' is thus not so much the whole but the artificial positing of a universal.

Privileging the unity of a single *oeuvre* marks a decisive break with Adorno's own practice. Arguably, Jameson's best texts address marginal authors and uncharacteristic or forgotten works (the essays on Eichendorff and Borchardt), and he usually insists on the heterogeneity within a body of work. He presumes a

3. Samuel Weber, "Capitalizing History: Notes on the Political Unconscious," in *Diacritics* 13 (Summer 1983), p. 14-28.

4. Cf. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review*, no. 146 (July-August 1984), pp. 53-92.

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harmonious unity not only because he desires to redirect attention precisely to concepts such as totality, the universal and particular, systematicity and even the concept itself. Above all he resists the heterogeneous elements because his most pressing concern is the "fall out of history" (4) he associates with the postmodern. Adorno's work is needed to resurrect the totality of history as narrative, a whole unfolding in its parts. In contradistinction to Adorno, who took a particular interest in what had fallen from the predominant historical narrative, Jameson's concept of *ouevre* reflects his concept of history (as such); a whole unfolding via a narrative structure. The simple solution to the problem of how to engage what is historically no longer current — to retain and preserve those elements in Adorno that are still useful today and to jettison others that history has rendered obsolete — presupposes what Jameson is not willing to grant, i.e., that parts can be broken loose at the expense of the whole. Occasionally forced to adopt such a strategy (e.g., with respect to the issue of the culture industry), Jameson avoids sacrificing the unity of Adorno's work by designating the entire *oeuvre* as a particular to be engulfed by the whole of history. It is not by chance that he favors theatrical metaphors to describe dialectical thought since the totality of this concept of history that rests on narrative and is reflected in his notion of *ouevre* is ultimately aesthetic in nature. He writes: "If everything in Adorno leads into the aesthetic, everything in Adorno's aesthetics leads out again in the direction of history" (239). The presuppositions and consequences of Jameson's reaffirmation of the traditional bond between philosophy of history and aesthetic features would merit a separate discussion. In any case the complicated question of the relation between art and philosophy in Adorno is decided in advance if raised under the reign of the universal and particular as the form of history.[5]

5. Jameson proves to be unusually evasive whenever he encounters the question of the role philosophy or, more generally, critical thought plays in art. At one crucial point he cites Adorno's dictum from *Asthetic Theory*: "Aesthetic reflexion must sanction that [the produced or constructed nature of the work of art] as the expression of the work's objectivity at the same time that it seeks critically to dissolve it" (181). Jameson remarks: "Such passages. . . . are rare enough in Adorno who rejects the exploration of reception in the general spirit of his antisubjective program" (181). Such passages are not all that rare, they are the core of the project of aesthetic theory: "The subject matter of aesthetics, too, is defined negatively as its undefinability. That is why art needs philosophy to interpret it. Philosophy says what art cannot say, although it is art alone which is able to say it: by not saying it." Theodor W. Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Christian Lenhardt (London: Routledge, 1984), p. 107. Jameson presumes that the emphasis on reception in general and reading in particular lends itself to subjectivism and thus runs counter to the objective logic of art. However, Adorno is not at all as decided on this issue as Jameson would like to presume. Jameson prefers to mask the problem of the relation between thought and art by displacing their opposition onto that of art as such and the individual artwork. This split, Jameson argues by way of an interpretation of the Oarsmen parable, is itself a result of the common social guilt that blemishes all artistic productivity. However, it is at least conceivable that the relation of philosophy and art demarcates something other than this familiar dialectic. Adorno's

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The implications of this totalizing concept of history become evident very early in *Late Marxism*. The commentary on *Negative Dialectic* opens with a discussion of the non-identical. Jameson argues that, contrary to its fetishization by postmodernists, such a "concept" (or rather non- or anti-concept) is unthinkable without the notion of identity and that both only function with reference to totality. The naive but common notion that with the emergence of the crisis of representation concepts like identity and totality have lost their validity once and for all is dialectically turned against itself: "For what Adorno teaches us is that questions of representation become interesting and agonizing, all-important, only when a concept of totality is maintained in place" (244). When Jameson illustrates this argument by way of the relation of consonance and dissonance in music it becomes obvious that the common matrix of this dialectic is a presupposed temporal continuum: "Even the most facile philosophical dialectic reminds us that all dissonance needs consonance in order to be registered as such" (171). What allows Jameson to assert the priority of identity over non-identity, of totality over contradiction, consonance over dissonance is the given medium of temporal continuity.[6] Yet, it is questionable if this kind of totalizing dialectic is indeed still "present" in Adorno. Despite Jameson's conviction that Adorno's break with Hegel consists in the removal of dialetic from its original context of self-consciousness and reflexivity, the transformation of Hegelian dialectic by Adorno may well be more significantly and productively analyzed with respect to temporality.

Adorno's work is perhaps unique in being marked by the experience of a fundamental *untimeliness* that resists its sublation into the totality of an essentially unfinished continuum. This untimeliness can be described as the contradictory and irresolvably ambivalent simultaneity of continuity and discontinuity that circumscribes the position of philosophy after Hegel. Jameson is aware of the existence of such a temporality, which he terms "survivorhood" (112), a reference to the famous opening phrase of the *Negative Dialectic*. However, he does not discuss the question of how the incomplete temporal continuum relates to this other untimely time. But since the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* — a text written (with Horkheimer) in the US in the 1940s and thus decidedly marked by the experience of a *hiatus* in time — Adorno was increasingly occupied with the uncanny experience of a coincidence between continuity and discontinuity. Their potential indifference, i.e, the impossiblity of differentiating between them, depends on a *telos*, but a *telos* that lies *behind* us: "Philosophy, which once seemed obsolete, lives on because the moment to realize it was

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insistence on a strange affinity between art and the non-identical — what Jameson occasionally refers to as the ontological motif — points in that direction. Yet, from a philosophical perspective, Jameson is correct to assert the untenability of the notion that art grants unmediated access to the non-identical that escapes philosophy.

6. On the problematic aspects of Jameson's temporality see the chapter on Jameson in Michael Sprinker's *Imaginary Relations. Aesthetics and Ideology in the Theory of Historical Materialism* (London: Verso, 1987), pp. 153-176.

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missed."[7] Philosophically speaking, Hegel's philosophy is this end; in non-philosophical but not unrelated terms, fascism is for Adorno the end that changed everything — because not enough changed. The truly disruptive experience is nothing other than the uninterrupted continuity: living on after the end.[8] In that sense Adorno's philosophy is indeed and in the strictest sense a "postmodern" philosophy — a philosophy that will always have come too late. Despite Jameson's intriguing title *Late Marxism* (with its obvious reference to 'Late Capitalism') his book leaves the implications of this temporality unanalyzed; necessarily so, one might say, because it potentially disrupts the very continuum he intends to establish via Adorno. The rupture in the continuum of time — whatever its various manifestations in Adorno's texts — accounts for a variety of quite abysmal and undecidable ambivalences in Adorno's otherwise reliably dialectical thought. This wholly anti-aesthetic difference between utopia and nihilism is the cause of some discomfort for Jameson. When he encounters it he designates it 'metaphysical,' even theological, and quickly adds: "Adorno generally takes pains to sunder this existential and metaphysical dialectic from a political materialism" (114-5). But if the problematic of time is too hastily abandoned, Jameson compensates this neglect by allowing tension and contradiction, ambivalences and conflicts to evolve unrestrictedly within the defined boundaries. It is at this point that questions of representation becomes crucial.

With his emphasis on representation, Jameson engages not only postmodernism but also the Adorno reception in Germany. Habermas' massive attack on *Dialectic of Enlightenment* as nihilistic in the Nietzschean tradition (and thus opposed to the modern project), a critique Jameson brilliantly refutes on several occasions, is one significant and influential instance of the prevailing desire to close the case on Adorno.[9] Jameson pursues a line of argument once suggested by Herbert Schnädelbach as the only way to 'rescue' Adorno. Following Michael Theunissen and others in claiming that negative dialectic is philosophically untenable and a capitulation in theology, Schnädelbach suggested that shifting the focus from philosophical coherence to the dimension of representation might allow for the discovery of a "narrative coherence" (*narrative Stringenz*).[10] Once more taking recourse to the convenient theatrical metaphors, Jameson suggests that his own approach to Adorno's texts will "stage [the]

7. Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E.B. Ashton (New York: Seabury Press), 1973, p. 3.

8. "National Socialism is alive and as of now we still do not know if it lives as the ghost of that which was so monstrous that it did not die of its own death or if it never died in the first place." Theodor Adorno: "Was bedeutet Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit?" in *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10 (Frankfurt/ a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1978), p. 555.

9. Jürgen Habermas, *Der philosophische der Moderne* (Frankfurt/a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1988), pp. 130-157.

10. Herbert Schnädelbach, "Dialektik als Vernunftkritik. Konstruktion des Rationalen bei Adorno," in *Adorno-Konferenz 1983*, ed. Jürgen Habermas *et al.* (Frankfurt/a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983), pp. 66-94.

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narrative structure in more modernist or 'reflexive' terms — i.e., in terms of the crisis of representation" (10). This approach prescribes not only a thematic focus on issues of representation, but also specific analyses of Adorno's own peculiar style, including the micro-units of syntax and word order. The very first quotation from Adorno in *Late Marxism* demonstrates what is at stake with the stress on representation as a way to escape the conceptual closure of philosophy: "Thought need not rest content in its logical regularity; it is capable of thinking against itself, without abolishing itself altogether; indeed were definitions of dialectic possible, that one might be worth proposing" (17, quoted from *Negative Dialectic*). In Jameson's paraphrase of this sentence the restrictions he imposes on the problematic of representation emerge. First he asserts that the categorical dismissal of inherited categories of philosophy is unwarranted since they "continue to inform daily life in the guise of common sense realism" (17-18). This valid objection against the presumed possiblity of an immediate break with the philosophical tradition (or modernity, for that matter) is then followed by a sentence that silently rewrites Adorno: "But how the concept *can be used* against itself is a complicated matter which we will try to characterize later on" (18, my emphasis). The minimal shifts in the formulation bear enormous consequences. First, Jameson assumes that thought and concept are strictly identical, overlooking the fact that Adorno's tactful subjunctive suspends the possiblity of a conceptual definition of dialectic in relation to thought ("*were* definitions possible. . . ."). Furthermore, Jameson's passive construction implicitly inserts an agent into the sentence, relegating concepts to tools in the hands of someone, while Adorno's formulation carefully avoids this. The dialectical truth of this minor incident of textual framing is this: the attempt to ensure the priority of the concept amounts to a *de facto* instrumentalization of both the concept and the quotation. Jameson's valuable accentuation on Adorno's writing serves to reduce representation to an instrumental function, a dramaturgical device and strategic pretext for his own rewriting program. Representation, so to speak, comes to the rescue, intervenes at those strategically important points where his rendering of Adorno's thought threatens to solidify into systematicity. Jameson speaks of Adorno's representational quality as "stereoscopic vision" (28) or a "double standard" (30). At one point Adorno's dialectic is referred to as "handbook and operating manual" (50). This language belies its instrumental character. Stereoscopic vision minimizes dialectical tension to a nonconflictual "on the one hand and on the other." Dialectic is celebrated as the powerful mediator and not as the measure of conflict.

Jameson's own stereoscopic vision and double standard make for a strange conglomerate of highly abstract arguments and steadfast empirical exposition. The interpretation of Adorno's notion of natural history as ceaseless dialectical rewriting, for instance, stands side by side with a remark insinuating that the Frankfurt School had always been at the forefront of animal rights. On the one hand, Adorno's elitism is dialecticized to the point of disappearance, on the other, Jameson points to Adorno's use of myths and fairytales as

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signs of his concern with popular culture. With respect to the issue of the culture industry Jameson readily concedes that Horkheimer's and Adorno's approach has become outdated. He astutely notes that the accusation of elitism does not hold, simply because Adorno and Horkheimer did not perceive of culture as a social zone. Since the famous chapter on the culture industry in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is not a theory of culture (but rather a theory of industry), it cannot be indicted for failing to understand culture. Jameson wants to retain some of the critical stance the authors had originally harbored towards the culture industry in order to mobilize it against the politically problematic implications of the recent interest in popular culture. The subtle irony of this pluralism — pluralism because the incompatibility of its elements is kept in check by representation as stereoscopic vision — is its reaffirmation of those tendencies of postmodernism against which *Late Marxism* is directed.

The ceaseless effort to dialecticize and rewrite leaves Jameson neither time nor space to dwell on those aspects of representation in Adorno that cannot be put to the service of dialectic. Yet it was Adorno who concluded his studies on Hegel — entitled "How to Read" — with the advice: "What presents itself as an obstacle to the dialectic is the truth-content still to be wrested from it."[11] Jameson's refusal to think dialectic against itself is most evident in his dealings with "mimesis" — together with "natural history" certainly among Adorno's more idiosyncratic concepts and one of those most hostile to dialectical reappropriation. When the concept is first addressed at the beginning of chapter seven (63-72, see also 101-105 and 153ff), Jameson explains the function of mimesis by way of an analogy with Walter Benjamin's notion of an "aura" in his essay "The Artwork in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction." Aura and mimesis are essential to their respective texts and authors while escaping precise definition; the shared definition of withdrawal from conceptual precision is perhaps their most defining feature. The analogy is, however, problematic since "aura" and its fate was the main issue of disagreement in Adorno's critical evaluation of Benjamin's essay. But it would be wrong to assume that because Adorno insisted on the contemplative reflexion of art he wanted and needed to retain an elitist notion of the artwork's aura, whereas Benjamin heroically confirmed its destruction as historically inevitable. It is more likely that Adorno objected to the liquidation of aura because, in Benjamin's analysis, it is — contrary to Jameson's claims — very clearly defined as authenticity: "The authenticity of a thing is the essence of all that is transmissible from its beginning, ranging from its substantive duration to its testimony of the history which it has experienced."[12] If aura is indeed the matrix of historicity, then Adorno could legitimately fear that the liquidation of aura signifies not only the historical disappearance of a particular tradition of artistic production and

11. *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (Frankfurt a. M.: 1974), p. 133.

12. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of its Mechanical Reproduction" in *Illuminations*, trans. Hannah Arendt (New York: Schocken Books, 1978), p. 221.

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reception but amounts to the disappearance of tradition and historicity altogether. Jameson pursues none of these implications, nor does he engage the discussion between Benjamin and Adorno. Paradoxically so, since Adorno's insistence on tradition would, in this instance at least, support Jameson's call for a return to history. Instead, his readings finally rely on a rather psychologized notion of 'mimesis' as an acting out of the repressed mimetic impulse.

Jameson would have us believe that the concept must be accepted *in order* to allow full access to the problematic of representation. But the minute analysis of *Negative Dialectic* in the first part of *Late Marxism*, with its stress on the primacy of concepts like totality and system, finally serves to restrict and even impoverish the notion of representation. What difference does it make as long as Jameson can successfully articulate and defend Adorno's Marxism, as long as he locates, at the core of each of the idealist concepts, its proper materialist foundations? Jameson takes care to stress that the law of identity takes the primordial form of an "exchange relation," that the "law of identity is strictly identical with the law of exchange" and that "identity is not an option but a doom" (24). With regard to "that zone of Adorno's thinking in closest proximity to many now familiar thematics of poststructuralism" (22), he writes: "A passing remark, early in the *Negative Dialectic*, makes it clear, however, that all of these themes are first and foremost to be grasped within another tradition, namely the Marxist one. This crucial phrase identifies 'what cannot be subsumed under identity' — that is to say everything that has been evoked in *Late Marxism* variously under the notions of heterogeneity, otherness, the qualitative, the radically new, the corporeal — as "what is called in Marxian terminology *use value*" (23). Jameson thus wants to affirm the primacy of identity together with its redeeming materialist (and thus historical) foundation. But he again neglects the nuances of Adorno's text. For when Adorno writes "what is called in Marxian terminology *use value*," use value is itself literally "used as." Adorno's subtle shifting of the term is far from inconsequential because the formulation links the classic discourse of materialism to the materiality of discourse. If the term use value is itself "used as," then the difference between use value and exchange value is by no means clear. If we conclude from this that language is always already exchange value, then the status of a term like "exchange value" must itself be affected by what it tries to designate. In other words, what use is exchange value without use value? The question of exchange and use in Marxist theory, Adorno seems to suggest, cannot be dissociated from linguistic exchanges. In this case Adorno's manner of representation intervenes to change the issue. This is not to say that Jameson's materialist reading should be exchanged for a "rhetorical" reading, but it does suggest that "materialism" itself is still *in* need of thought. Moreover, it suggests that no thought, no theory, Marxism included, can have uncomplicated access to its own materialist grounding. Jameson, however, hypostasizes Adorno's use of exchange and use value, taking both at face value, so to speak. Only once this materialist base has been secured is he willing to entertain questions of representation and the

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possible effect they may have on Marxist theory itself. (Regarding, for example, the fundamental theorem of base and superstructure which, as Jameson puts it, is not a concept but a problem asking for unique *ad hoc* solutions.)

The emphasis on represention remains ultimately subservient to and stands in direct proportion to its function. It is, after all, a strategy, and Jameson does not go so far as to raise the question of strategy itself. How to think strategy in the "crisis of representation" cannot even emerge as a question if the concept reigns and representation remains firmly anchored in a smooth form-content dialectic. Perhaps against his own intentions, and certainly against or despite his rhetoric, Jameson preserves the instrumental character of representation — even if its function is to locally subvert or undermine the power of the concept. In the final analysis, he remarks, such "local analyses are to be dissolved in the larger context" (109).

While sheer renunciation of the concept or of philosophical tradition in general (including Marxism) is critically powerless, it does not necessarily follow that the unavoidable *appeal* to the concept and totality is identical with their supremacy and necessity. One obvious way to appeal to or invoke concepts — the quotation — is never explicitly mentioned by Jameson, though it plays a crucial role in Adorno's own procedure, as the section on "use value" and "exchange value" just indicated. The relation between "nature" and "history" in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, subjected by Jameson to an effectively endless process of dialectical reversals, was defined by Adorno himself on another occasion precisely in terms of the quotation: "Dialectic comes to a stop in the image and cites the mythical in the historically most recent as the distant past: nature as proto-history."[13] In the form of quotation the dialectic momentarily arrests the image (and its own flow). The quotation is thus determined by that peculiar temporality discussed earlier, for every quotation repeats its original context and is yet forever distinct from it. Adorno's essay on Eichendorff contains the seeds of such a theory of quotation, the systematic elaboration of which could provide the means to specify and think through what Jameson calls "strategy," "acting out," "dramatization" or "rewriting." It is with respect to quotation that the deeper reasons for Jameson's reluctance to discuss at length the temporality of "survivorhood" become apparent: the problematic of quotation links certain temporal and spatial questions to language, and it is ultimately Adorno's theory of language that Jameson is not willing to construct, despite the fact that all essential features of *Aesthetic Theory* — the artwork as broken promise, its similarity to language (*Sprachähnlichkeit*) etc. — point in this direction.

How this theory of language and its implications for materialism would differ from Jameson's dialectical account can be seen from the following example. The last part of *Negative Dialectic* is, much to Jameson's dismay, entitled "models." (It contains the discussion of freedom in Kant, the section on Hegel and natural history, and finally the metaphysics chapter.) Jameson's critique

13. Theodor Adorno, *Kierkegaard. Construction of the Aesthetic*, trans. and ed. by Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 1989, p. 54.

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of Adorno's designation of these chapters as "models" rests on the inert character and fetiscized connotations of this word. However, Jameson's critique is only a posture, a strategic stage. It is quickly modulated and dialecticized by a detour through Benjamin's notion of constellation, and, *voilà*: the static "model" transforms itself according to the dynamics of modulation into an open narrative form: "such a text," Jameson concludes, "presumably has a narrative time not unlike that of the sonata form" (61). In a model fashion the texts of "models" have been rewritten into an "infinite modulation" (62). Yet Adorno has not used this term only in *Negative Dialectic*. In 1962 he published a collection of essays entitled *Eingriffe. Neun kritische Modelle*, the word "*Eingriff*" (i.e., surgical operation, but also intervention, seizure, encroachment) underscoring the punctual violence Jameson's reading of "*Modell*" tries to subdue.[14] Adorno's brief introduction to the collection unfolds the connotations of "*Eingriff*," the discreetly pseudomedical term for abortion. The second paragraph is a dutiful reiteration of the dialectic of form and content: "Language which makes itself independent of what the various issues require is no style" (*Eingriffe*, 7). Adorno immediately reassures his readers, however, that his own representation will of course vary according to the content. But the opening paragraph of that same introduction stands in violent contrast to this tame characterization of a good and conscientious stylist. Before the stylist begins his work, language itself has long been given over to suffering and abuse: "Before all meaning and against it, many words clump together in the current of communication. Such a clod is also the word '*Eingriff*' which tends to follow the forbidden affair that had unwanted consequences" (*Eingriffe*, p. 7). The implications of this are manifold and as difficult to disentangle as the "clod" itself, words grown into clusters, clots or clumps by the sheer force of their existence in the stream of communication. The passage, bordering on what some might be inclined to call a tasteless alliance between abortions and philosophical investigations, looses nothing of its violent undertones by the fact that the imagery of language and pregnancy is historically legitimated by a reference to Karl Kraus, who still thought of language as the prostitute a good writer can turn back into a virgin. Adorno's formulation is daring and violent not only because philosophical intervention designates itself as such an incision, but ultimately because what is cut out in a surgical "*Eingriff*" is literally some sort of lump of flesh. Adorno's deliberately provocative and literal use of this word in this context is already the example of a punctual incision into common language. He continues ironically: "Presumably the abuse of language is too deep-rooted (engrained, "*eingefleischt*," literally, has become part of the flesh) for the objective spirit to be able to break with the habit" (7). *Eingriffe* that try to remove from the living body of language what is "*eingefleischt*," what has become flesh, inevitably involve pain because the spirit — insofar as it articulates itself — is required to cut its own flesh. The literalized metaphor "*eingefleischt*"

14. *Eingriffe. Neun kritische Modelle* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1974).

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points to a physical, material quality of language and it grants language the power of affecting material realities. Accordingly, Adorno prescribes philosophy's task: " What happened to the words is to be taken by the word," is to be taken literally, materially. Such insistence on the dead letter's flesh is not so quickly dissolvable into dialectical flux.

A text like the introduction to *Eingriffe* underscores the need to construct more precisely Adorno's theory of language, not at the expense of or instead of his materialism, but for materialism's sake. Jameson's book makes clear that such an enterprise, as any other reading of Adorno today, cannot dispense with intellectual rigor and systematicity. Adorno himself, however, has given indications of how his work might have to be read in order to avoid the problems that Jameson's book inevitably raises, the dangers of dogmatism on the one hand and those of relativistic pluralism on the other.

Eingriffe begins with an essay on the question of philosophy today. Like Jameson, Adorno recognizes the need to hold on to philosophical tradition: local incisions are not the same as radical uprootings; cutting oneself off from tradition altogether is simply to saw off the branch on which one sits. The aporetic dilemma posed by the impossiblity of appealing to philosophy proper any longer and the impossibility of breaking away from it entirely is not solved by Adorno. Nor is it staged or acted out. But it can be read in a quotation: "Kant's famous verdict, 'the critical path alone is still open,' belongs to those sentences in which the philosophies from which they originate pass the test by outlasting themselves as fragments" (*Eingriffe*, 14). This singular, fragmented, punctual quotation is neither identity nor non-identity nor the dialectical unity of both because the constative aspects of the content remain in oppositional tension to its performative qualities. Such fragments are not a given but the result of an incision; they cannot be broken away at random according to a logic of playful bricolage, nor are they, however, dependent on the whole, as Jameson would have it. They are themselves already the product of the critical path — critical here understood in the sense of separation. Critical incisions produce particles, broken remnants that cannot be restored to the order of universal and particular because they were never part of it. Which is to say: Kantian transcendental philosophy cannot be resumed, nor will we ever be done with it. But we can, in the process of critical reading, thinking and quoting, discover in it that which it was not before. In other words: to remain true to Kant's dictum means at some point to part with the whole of Kant. To remain true to Adorno's dialectic can only mean to part with it. This parting with dialectic begun already in Adorno's work. At least he remained deeply suspicious of the dialectic Jameson celebrates, critical of dialectic's dangerous power to erase the contradictions at the very moment it has revealed them as such. Where it celebrates "dialectic as such," Jameson's *Persistence of Dialectic*, is, in effect, a resistance to dialectic, a resistance to that within dialectics that resists its dialecticization.

Eva Geulen

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Suggested Reading: Jameson on Adorno

Fredric Jameson, *Late Marxism: Adorno, the Persistance of the Dialectic* (London: Verso, 1990), 270 pp. + x.

Frederic Jameson is one of the great tattooed men of our times. Every inch of flesh is covered: that web of cat's cradles coiling up the right calf are Greimas and Levi-Strauss; dripping over the right shoulder, under the sign of the Cimabue Christ — the inverted crucifixion — hangs Derrida; and, hardly recognizable in those many other overlapping splotches of color is just about everybody else: Lyotard, Sartre, Habermas, et al. "All One, All Different" is scrolled across his chest. In *Late Marxism* Jameson selects carefully before posing a significant finger on a densely engraved quadrate of his left hip, Adorno!, and falls into a roll: "Adorno you will notice is like Althusser, only more like Sartre, except the idea of totality, in my opinion, as I'll say again later, differs from Rorty, coming back to Luhman, maybe like Marxism, late, very late, minus Hegel's concept of time, perhaps, maybe, almost . . . Take another look, another look, just not too close, please, ladies and gentleman, give the man room to breath!".

This is mocking no doubt, but what is this: Adorno's aesthetics "can speak a variety of speculative languages, none of which ever finally freezes over . . . like Lukács's, Bloom's, Macherey's, Bakhtin's, or Derrida's"? He forgot Sartre. No worry, skip a line: "The history of aesthetic situations is here as omnipresent and inescapable as in Sartre." But where did de Man go? Skip again: "to use Paul de Man's suggestive phrase" (182-183). Open any page and the same miscellaneous cornucopia comes tumbling out, each name being a distraction from what could conceivably be the issue at hand: "After Freud (indeed, after Marx), after Nietzsche, after Foucault on madness, after a whole enormous enlargement in our sympathy with what people do (this word, however, meant in Rousseau's sense as *Verstehen* . . ." (236). If neither the *indeed, after Marx* or the *whole enormous* arm flailing adequately sharpens things up, Jameson's clarification of sympathy as the idea of *Verstehen* in Rousseau — great German hermeneuticist — makes everything sparkle.

Hit and Run

Jameson is so preoccupied storing up this bounty that occasionally a paragraph will swerve to throw in another garbled reference and skid into the wrong topic. He does not mind; he is playing bumper cars. But if you read carefully, and still register concussions, it is a bad experience. For example, a passage on Adorno's style takes up the question of Karl Kraus' influence, but concludes making the point — *Watch Out!* — that Benjamin is more important to Kraus:

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"What Adorno found here (in Kraus), I want to suggest, is the very paradigm of an expressive syntax, in which the actual machinery of sentence structure is itself pressed into service, in all its endless variety, and mobilized to convey meaning far beyond its immediate content as mere communication and denotation. To Kraus, far more than to Adorno himself, might well apply Benjamin's idea that 'speech communicates itself', and perhaps also his idiosyncratic notion of language as 'non-representational mimesis'." (64)

The only way to get even for having to read something like this is to notice, line by line, what it prefers to hide. First of all, Jameson is barely interested in what Adorno found of importance in Kraus. Jameson is a literature professor, besides being a first rate list maker, and he could not possibly believe that Kraus — rather than, say, Hoelderlin or George — was for Adorno the preeminent writer to use syntax expressively. All expressive language is in any case syntactically expressive. And whatever there is between Kraus and Adorno, the interchangeable elements of a mechanical order — that sentence-machinery Jameson cites — would not begin to comprehend what is shared in their nuanced language. Jameson is exploiting what noone would doubt — that Adorno and Kraus are somehow inwardly related — without in any way developing the content of this relation. The bulk of the passage works at taking up the slack uncoiled by the contentlessness of his claim: The *very* paradigm, the *actual* machinery, the *endless* variety, the *far* beyond, the *far* more, the Adorno *himself*, means to master the arbitrary by raising it to the absolute along the lines of a "truly great vacation." Rhetorical largess — from the "I want to suggest" to the "might well apply" to the "perhaps also" — is to supply the pomp of judicious reflexion for thinking that never got a second thought.

Neither is Jameson much concerned with how Benjamin's ideas of speech communicating itself and 'non-representational mimesis' resonate in Kraus' work, the point that should justify Jameson's skewed course. He has nothing to say about what either of these hardly self-evident quotations mean or how they characterize Kraus. Suspicion that conceptually not much stands back of Jameson's associations — other than the desire to fold in some lines that once caught his attention — is prompted especially by the second quotation, "non-representational mimesis." Benjamin never used the phrase, though he did introduce the idea of "*unsinnliche Ähnlichkeiten*." If "non-sensual similarities" is what Jameson meant — and noting as an aside that he subsumes it to the currently all purpose "representation" — the nonsense clue is obvious: Benjamin's idea is "idiosyncratic." In what sense is one person's idiosyncrasy that which he shares compellingly with someone else? In the sense of not sharing it.

Jameson probably dubbed Benjamin's concept idiosyncratic because it serves as a convenient dismissal for an idea he does not understand and does not want to have to say two words about. This is confirmed not only by the bad translation but also by the claim that it applies more to Kraus than Adorno. In not recognizing what is coiled up in the concept he fails to trace it into Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* where it becomes the central idea: The history of art is the transformation of

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external mimesis — an aping which Adorno sometimes, though inconsistently, distinguishes as *mimicry*[1] — into the principle of self-likeness.

What Jameson does not understand in Benjamin and Adorno becomes the asserted, self-evident bond between Benjamin and Kraus. The swerve in the passage follows Jameson's impulse to conjure as his own power a force to which he is subordinately uncomprehending. Those who make their way through this passage with some shudder *vis-à-vis* big thinking are sensing their unknowingness refractedly as Jameson's authority.

On The Way Down

The puzzle of this book is that it is being widely read, even though it is impossible to read. Wherever the eye falls and takes seriously what it finds the molecules of print start kissing each other goodby. It gets teary on all sides. Self-aware, the eye must decide to skirt the semiotic pulp. But then how is it possible to document the puzzle of *Late Marxism* if even its devoted readership is unlikely to allow itself to reflect on one sentence or another? For now, it will have to be on a dare: here is the elastic cable attached to the railing, this is the Golden Gate Bridge, below is *Late Marxism*. The topic has to do with Adorno and structuralism and though the print is already starting to swim in all directions, Jameson is *certain* of one thing: "It is *certain* that Adorno is a traditional, that is to say a prestructuralist, philosopher." Adorno is a prestructuralist. Done. But just lines later the level of assurance bestowed by certainty is uncannily surpassed by *confidence*: "It can be asserted with some *confidence* that he never goes as far as the poststructuralists" (234-235). That is hard! A prestructuralist does not go as far as a poststructuralist. Why not? Because he has "*some* notion of thinking . . .beyond a material embodiment in language."[2] *Some* is now followed by *almost*: "What needs to be added here is that the 'concept' functions in Adorno as a

1. Jameson's narrow understanding of this group of ideas shows up again in his treatment of mimicry: "This notion of a mimicry — a *strong* form of mimesis — at work within the very technical concepts of science and philosophy themselves, a mimetic impulse that embarrasses them and which they seek to deny (in the *strong* Freudian sense) . . . " (65). Mimicry is *strong* mimesis. That is all there is to it. Jameson — like Stanley Fish and a dozen other literary critics and literature text books that in the last decade just happened to develop "strong" and "weak" forms of interpretation — relies on a culture-wide supersession of conceptual differentiation by the self-evident determinate of strength. Characteristically, he goes on to muddy this conceptual deficiency by enjambing the comment in a reference to another big idea, in this case Freud's concept of denial — naturally, the *strong* concept of denial — which is dredged up to explain Adorno's idea of the taboo on mimesis. But this is again misleading because Adorno had his own theory of this taboo, and it has more to do with the division of labor than with the division of psychic agencies. *Note*: All italics are added.

2. Jameson is superficial: Since the distinction of thought and language is already in language, the argument that thought and language are identical can only be made on the basis of the assumption — suppressed yet determinate — that they are different in a non-linguistic fashion. Whether Jameson is right that the denial of the distinction is essential to poststructuralism, his own formulation amounts to a rediscovery of Watson's behaviorism.

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constricting and reifying system *almost* as iron-clad as language itself for poststructuralism" (234-235). With certainty Adorno is a prestructuralist who is confidently not, somewhat not, almost a poststructuralist. Probably. But one problem remains: Adorno did not think that the concept *per se* is an ultimate block to reality. If he had his writings would be chalked up to the irrationalism against which his dialectical research took shape.[3]

The opposite direction from *certainty* to *almost* runs from *in general* to *more exactly* by way of *indeed precisely*. Thus the brief recoil: "Art *in general*, now very much including the individual works and *indeed precisely* consisting of them, will be opposed to everything which is not art; or, *more exactly*, to everything 'cultural' . . ." (132). This could perhaps be sorted out and sense insisted on, but that would take real gullibility. For this is not a fragment of an argument. Rather, Jameson is using subordinating articulations paratactically; in his hands they become sandbags and ballast to give direction to an indifferent material.

Again

Where Jameson does come through lucidly, the question of how well he has understood Adorno continually recurs. Note, for instance, his comments on a passage quoted from Adorno's *Positivism Dispute* concerning the concept of totality. First, the passage from Adorno: "It is almost tautological to say that one cannot point to the concept of totality in the same manner as one can point to the facts, from which totality distances itself as a concept" (231). Reattach that elastic cable: According to Jameson, Adorno wants to show in the denial of the possibility of pointing factually to the concept of totality the following self-contradiction: "The misconception seems to be based on the idea that if you talk about something repeatedly, you must like it; to point something out insistently turns into the advocacy of the thing, very much on the principle of the messengers who bring bad news (and suffer the consequences)." The tip-off to the mistakeness of Jameson's interpretation is that — like a pop-tune knotting a tail of homilies onto "Mama Said" — it tags together a string of platitudes from *talk about it/like it* to *bad news messengers pay the consequences*. The implicit self-contradiction that he discerns could not be what Adorno is talking about because, as Jameson explains it, it is not a tautology, whereas Adorno emphasizes just this quality of the assertion. And Adorno's point is not so hard to understand: he is responding to positivists who reject the concept of totality on the grounds that it cannot be factually observed. Adorno finds a way to agree with their objection in a way that undermines the criticism: To say that totality cannot be factually observed does not challenge the concept but only repeats tautologically an aspect of it's definition, which is that totality is not a fact but an organization of the facts.

While the eye balks at studying the detail of *Late Marxism*, Jameson insists that it is the right level of focus. "This book offers detailed readings" of

3. See: "Critique of the Organic," in T. W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. x-xxiii.

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Adorno's main writings (3). This level of attention is coherent with what he picks out as the specific importance of Adorno's work: "The originality, indeed, of his philosophical work . . . lies in his unique emphasis on the presence of late capitalism as a totality within the very forms of our concepts or of the works of art themselves. No other Marxist theoretician has ever staged this relationship between the universal and the particular, the system and the detail, with this kind of single-minded yet wide-ranging attention" (9). Benjamin may have gotten there first, but Jameson is still largely right: Adorno interpreted the particular as a microcosm of the whole. This is not to be confused with a vision of infinity stored since creation in a grain of sand. Here the particular is a result. The intention of dialectics is to know this particular from within and in doing so to fulfill the Hegelian obligation that philosophy grasp time in concepts. But where Hegel's dialectic is both progressive and in principle at every point reconciled with itself, Adorno conceived a dialectic at a standstill that would potentiate in reflection the antagonistic content of history. By following out the mediation of the particular through the social totality, negative dialectics transforms the power of totality into the force of historical reflection in that it releases the history stored in the particular as the power that vitiates it.[4] For Adorno, therefore, dialectics is on the one hand (as he wrote) the wrong state of things, and, on the other, dialectical research is the capacity to give shape in the particular to this state of things. To the extent that Adorno succeeds in this his writings are neither a metaphor, a method, a perspective, or a system.

Though Jameson points out the central idea of this form of interpretation, and although there are traces of many of the related concepts, the thought never becomes internal to the book. If it had, Jameson's intention to present a detailed reading of Adorno in light of what he promotes as Adorno's importance — his micrological research — would have given *Late Marxism* a dialectical turn. It did not: the reflexion in which the totality is discovered in the particular never occurs. Instead of dialectical research the book is the work of common sense: Jameson compares and contrasts, as if interpretation would result from adding and subtracting; he points weightily to paradoxes and complexity, which he confuses with dialectics; he supplants insight with the self-evidence of moral and political posturing; he names names and effuses.[5] Hardly dialectical,

4. Totality in Adorno's writings means the functional context that in various ways develops the exchange relation. Totality is no more or less real than this functional order. It should not be thought that totality means a system that is simply closed. It is closed and disorganized by its principle of closure. This relation is misunderstood by the usual argument (advanced by Piccone and D'Amico) that Adorno exaggerated the idea of the totally administered society. The origin of this misunderstanding is a credulousness for administration. Those who think Adorno overestimated the functional web do so because they imagine that, if the world were so tightly organized as Adorno claims, planes would leave on the minute. Adorno's point, rather, is that administration is a principle of disorganization.

5. Characteristically: "Adorno complexly rehearses the dialectic of subject and object . . ." (73)

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Jameson's stance toward these writings is what Hegel disparaged as *gesunder Menschenverstand* (healthy human understanding): Adorno is the topic, and — What could be more obvious? — Jameson writes about this topic. The act of abstraction — the division of the universal from the particular — that sets subject and object at opposite extremes goes unquestioned.

This commonsensicalness lies back of much of the chaos and popularity of *Late Marxism*. Like his English alter-ego, Terry Eagleton, Jameson is a conventional thinker whose will to occupy a front seat on the flying wedge of literary criticism, combined with an omnivorous intellectual metabolism, led him into genuinely anti-conventional work, which he regularly scrambles. This does not bother his readership: anxious to share his velocity, they take the incoherence as the mark of authenticity on ideas that they are content to let hover overhead, reserving their attention for tracking the pulse of *idées reçues* just under the surface.

The Deeper Message

Because Jameson's thought remains external to the content of his book, this content — the philosophical summaries and moral-political posturing — stands in the way of recognizing what takes place in *Late Marxism*. It is by giving attention to its impoverished detail — the non-intentional level of the book — rather than gullibly, and fruitlessly, responding at the level of argumentation and political identity, that the book can be brought to show its hand.

Throughout *Late Marxism* — as elsewhere — Jameson comes out in favor of historical reflection. It makes sense that he turns to Adorno who, in his own words, wanted to recover "the presence of the forgotten" by marshalling the force of the systematic against itself. Yet this is not what Jameson's approach to Adorno's work is about and, whatever he has to say on the matter, he is not interested in historical reflexion. As he writes, bewilderingly, in a sentence that must be taken in two parts: "I have considered these (Adorno's) writings *synchronously*, as parts of a *single unfolding system* . . ." Whatever he writes, Jameson must somewhere say the word *synchronous* just as there are people compelled repeatedly to contract the lids of one eye. And just as there is a sense that, however instantaneous this physiognomical gesture appears to be, it responds to the need to block an internal impulse, in *Late Marxism* Jameson's buoyant synchronous plan shows a ripple in the surface that it means to obscure: the material of the book, what unfolds in the *single unfolding system* — the immanent historicity of Adorno's writings — is not synchronous: Unfoldment, however it is done, occurs only in time. A synchronously unfolding system is an oxymoron. Yet synchronicity nevertheless represents Jameson's ideal for his presentation of Adorno's work: whatever its content, he will treat it ahistorically.

Late Marxism does succeed at stifling this content. The second part of the sentence under discussion shows how he collects the force for this one-dimensionalization: "I have considered these writings . . .as though the various Adorno's, in various stages of their youth and decay (as in 2001), were . . . all together" (3). The movie reference is not just parenthetical. Its well known opening sequence

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of images from embryo to ape and so one marks out and confirms the imagery of the thought that precedes it. Interestingly, while Jameson draws on this image for ahistorical confirmation, the film sequence itself is historical. He has simply quoted a vaguely germane popular image and dropped the record needle on its opening blast of sound: as such it becomes the self-evident imprimatur of togetherness. The force of the reference is not its content but its generic popularity, that in which the assumption of agreement and solidarity is unquestionable. This force serves as the substance of an all purpose self-evidence. He might just as well have filled his parentheses with "like Marilyn Monroe."

This gives some perspective on Jameson's *we* (the voice he adopts in all his work). For the book not only reads like but is an advertisement — in this case — for Adorno. When Jameson writes that Adorno "may turn out to be just what *we* need today" (5), there is reason to suspect that this claim to political authenticity is the opportunistic, importuning "I" of mass culture solidarity. This is confirmed by the manipulativeness of the book's incomparable message: "The *deeper* message of my book . . . has to do with celebration of the dialectic as such" (11). Contrary to Adorno, for whom dialectics is the wrong state of things and negative dialectics its presentation, Jameson eagerly adopts the ad world's mantle of up-beat rationalization and invites everyone to tie a balloon to the idea of the antagonistic totality. But, his message is more significant than that: it is incomparable, literally. Scanning the page and pages of this claim, it turns out that — though it could be tagged onto various thoughts — the deeper message forms no specific comparative. It is that of the newer, better, faster type that, by being newer, better, faster than nothing ascertainable, preempts the act of discernment that might find it older, slower, worse, or more shallow. The seeming objectivity of the subjectively posited standard — surpassed by whatever is being promoted — is a measure of the degree to which the individual is overwhelmed. What is *more than* pivots on this subjectively coerced index so that what is *more than* is already part of you, your better, faster, newer and — specifically in *Late Marxism* — your deeper part. Thus the technique of Jameson's call to celebration enjoins as does any advertisement: by insinuating itself. Jameson's deeper message — as with the reference to *2001* — is that members are signed up prior to joining.

Those Crazy Texts

After introducing what he claims is Adorno's most important philosophical contribution — the interpretation of the universal in the particular — Jameson writes: "As for the current ratings of Adorno's stock . . ." (9). This borders on a blessed obliviousness. And Jameson, who writes upward of three books a year at the same stylistic level as *Late Marxism*, must count on it. Whatever is revealed by his eye on the futures market — or by later remarks such as that Adorno wants concepts "cashed at face value"(28) — he would not feel revealed. The characteristic aspect of his writing is that language is a matter of indifference. This encompasses not only the slap-dash writing and comments such as: "or, if you

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prefer a different kind of terminology" and "truth, however that word is used" (234). The indifference to language is most evident just where it might least be expected: where he lays claim to the exalted powers of textuality.

Notice, for example — in a discussion of Adorno's concept of mimesis and whether philosophy can effect a mimetic response — how Jameson conceives the relation of the "reader's mind" to an invocation of the powers of undomesticated language: "Whether philosophy can actually do that, whether the most powerful or formally ingenious or evocative philosophical sentence structure can intervene with (mimetic) effects of this kind in the reader's mind, is open to some doubt" (64). Mimesis is the affinity of subject and object as is felt in one's knees on seeing someone fall on theirs. Yet the disembodied quality of Jameson's expression — "the reader's mind" — makes evident that the idea of mimesis was never considered: Jameson presupposes that the mind is a box at the far end of the nervous system, separate as well from language. When he claims that the idea of a mimetically compelling language is "open to some doubt" he asserts, on the basis of a commonsense assumption of the diremption of subject and object, that the thought of such a mimetically compelling language is beyond consideration. He assumes that words could never carry the distance from finger tip to cerebrum. Even when he argues the contrary, this is not what he says: "A brilliant essay in literary criticism might well open up possibilities of reading, or rereading, some hitherto opaque, dull, or exasperatingly perverse text . . . and even disengaging the formation of some new aesthetic or poetic within your mind" (132). Because the power of these perverse and exasperating texts is just the ability to make it all the way into "your mind" — back behind where reading usually takes place — they hover at a fixed distance from it.

While Jameson gestures easily on all sides to strange, perverse and ingenious texts — capable certainly of anything — his veneration serves a dismissiveness. These texts will never rock the boat. They can be as crazy as they want just because, fully divided from the mind, they are in themselves meaningless. Together with the textual fluidity implied by the many references to "rewriting" and "rereading," Jameson's wild texts are gathered up around something much homelier than his easy familiarity with the textual far side is meant to suggest: the philosophy of language of that garden variety skeptical empiricism that is the *sensus communis* of most of what passes for linguistic radicalism in America.

Though he can easily assert the opposite — he considers words raw material, properly bearing a conventional, denotative significance. To be meaningful, concepts must renounce all those points where Ovid starts to pass his hand over them. It is, therefore, with the best of intentions that this commensensicalness wants to inspire concern that the idea of mimesis might fail the test: "It is not clear to what degree Adorno discovered the possibilities of the notion of mimesis in Benjamin's infrequent use of it: what is certain is that he went on to make it mean much more than Benjamin did — perhaps too much more" (64). Concepts that cannot be unambiguously defined are to be abandoned as magical: "These magical terms, which are evoked to explain everything without ever

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themselves being explained, until at length we become persuaded that they could never themselves be explained or grounded" (64).

Jameson is right that these concepts cannot be grounded. Yet his commensensicalness severs the possibility of understanding Adorno's work: First of all, he cannot see that the problem of the whole of Adorno's writings is to follow language where it wants to go and thereby develop the critical-historical content of language in music (the concepts of development, theme, romanticism) in philosophy (beginning with the concept of enlightenment) and in literature the non-conceptual knowledge such as is coiled up in words like George's *gar*.[6] The range taken by the concepts of aura and mimesis in *Aesthetic Theory* is in the interest of lucidity and comprehension, not the confused obscurity in which Jameson's commensicalness finds itself when actually faced with the dialectical development of a concept.

Secondly, the subject/object division implicit in the need to ground language means that the idea of immanent criticism escapes Jameson. *Late Marxism* barely treats of this central concept in Adorno's writings. But at one point Jameson does take up the question of what he calls the "Archimedean problems of the negative dialectic." He demands to know how this dialectic establishes a fulcrum from which to move the universe. Adorno, he claims, "needs something from outside the system in order to criticize it." That is not true. If the system were not inherently self-critical there would be no reason to criticize it. Immanent criticism turns the principle of identity, which otherwise serves the subordination of object to subject, into the power for the presentation of the way in which an object resists its subjective determination and finds itself lacking. This would amount to knowledge of an object from within, which for commonsense is magic. Thus it is Jameson, not Adorno, who requires that criticism find an Archimedean — external — leverage point. Jameson continues in his misunderstanding: not only would the source of criticism have to be external, "but in Adorno's case this something would remain an idea," a "formal subterfuge" (235). In that Jameson who cannot conceive of ideas as other than a subjective abstraction, the formalism is on his side. Immanent criticism, on the contrary, is the development of idea as the object's self-dissatisfaction that at every point moves toward what is not idea: it potentiates from within the requirement of an objective transformation.

Thirdly, it is obvious why Hegel thought *gesunder Menschenverstand* was unfit for thinking. Its opinion that the movement of concepts is fruitless wandering — a spurious infinity — is insisted upon reciprocally with the arbitrary and unthinking limitation of concepts. Insofaras Jameson is relentlessly level-headed it is no surprise that he disparages the amorphousness of the concepts of aura and mimesis and picks just the wrong moment to dig in his heals: "These

6. See "On Lyric Poetry and Society" trans. by Bruce Mayo, in *Telos* (Summer 1974), pp. 56-71. Now also in Theodor W. Adorno, *Notes to Literature* translated by Shierry Weber Nicolsen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 50-53.

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concepts have nothing in common" (64). This brings him up short for understanding *Aesthetic Theory*. Central to it is the relation between aura — that which is more than is factually present in an art work — and mimesis: just by its internal mimesis of what is untrue in the world the radically anti-auratic artwork becomes the negative figure of what would be other than the given, and therefore, once again becomes auratic.

"Theory"

Jameson's self-assuredness over the proper confines of thought and language is defined *vis-à-vis* uncertainties in which his confidence is mediated. This mediation is not hard to discern. His complaint over the magical concepts of aura and mimesis implies the need to authorize a much broader ban. For while there is a great deal to say about mimesis and aura, there is no less to say about the concepts of experience, freedom, beauty and so on. Jameson's worry over two concepts must extend phobically to language altogether. This apprehension is evident in the quotation marks in which he sets off word after word: "Adorno certainly does have a "style" (like the rest of the 'modern masters' . . .)" (11). These quotation marks express a reluctant agreement to make do with language. Words are accepted on the basis of a peremptory gesture that means to isolate them from whatever guilty associations cling to them — e.g. to style and modern masters — and threaten to drag them out beyond the breakers of good sense. The neutralized word becomes terminological, a reified technical device — set between the self and the world — over which the self disposes. The word bracketed in parenthesis acquires a quality of obviousness, as if to say: We all know what "style" "modern masters" "freedom" or "belief" (etc.) is about and just what must be excluded for this word to be usable. But in that these words separated from their inherent attributions are meaningless, Jameson's *bien entendu* is without content other than a self-assertion that — like his use of the reference to *2001* — demands nodding along. His bracketed words are a technical yet suggestively self-promoting language. As such, language is a façade behind which an isolated self finds a fulcrum — that pivot requisite of all theory, according to Jameson — for manipulation. This dynamic is not limited just to the words Jameson sets in quotations marks; it is the idea of theory throughout his work and the one that makes him an ideal thinker for MLA theoreticians: The tattooed body of total theory is a character mask which, though it cannot speculate philosophically, is adequate for speculation of all other types.

Suggested Reading

Whatever else it is, *Late Marxism* is professorial: Each page opens to a jowly: "So it is . . .," "To be sure . . .," and "It is surely . . ." And Jameson does not hesitate to reach for maxims that ring somberly from the lecture hall: "It is, indeed, not people who change but rather situations." This maxim is a clue to the nature of the professorial throughout the book, and to the book as a whole. What does Jameson's apothegm mean? That people stay the same while the world

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changes? No, because as he draws on its wisdom he continues: "This can also account for the alterations of my own views" (4). How could the claim to the unchangingness of people explain Jameson's change? It cannot. Though his comment does make plain what he was trying to say with his maxim, which was: it is not people who change situations but the reverse. A and while it is important to notice that he did not trouble to get his thought as far as logical coherence, it is more important to notice that he did not need to. His concern was the production of the semblance of a maxim in a book that is a Potemkin village of thought. Its illusoriness is the standard of the linguistic architecture: the *in my opinion* and the *perhaps* that pepper line after line; the *I want to suggest*; and most frequently, the *seems*, which on word count alone would need be recognized as the substance of the book, larding as it does whole pages with variants on: *it seems clear* and *it would seem to suggest* and *mass culture seems to demand*(150). Throughout, rudiments of academic judiciousness — that controlled suspension of conclusion — become one of the forces of this *as if*. Its appeal is not hard to locate: Since the contemporary relativism to which this *as if* thinking speaks is less a matter of philosophy than an indifference shaped by a panicky fear of knowing and the need to protect a self that insists on believing that it can somehow keep pulling the strings, all resignation of knowledge in the name of illusion can expect to be met with applause and relief.

The illusion Jameson means to provide is of a particular sort. Just as 19th century photographers regularly used *gommage* — working over the negative with an eraser — to instill the false aura of spirit around a face or across a landscape,[7] Jameson has a dozen techniques for smearing a damp cloth across the page — beginning with the exploitation of the Adorno-Kraus relation to the incomparable comparative, to all that *seems* to be, and so on — and his aim is a related aura: *Late Marxism* manufactures the familiar. This is the halo produced for every name Jameson lists. Whenever he falls into a roll of Lyotard, Gramsci, Sappho, and Schelling or intersperses a sentence with "(Heidegger!)" and ends another with ":so far Kant!", he transforms thought into rungs for academic arboreals arcing their way to success making lists of their own. The subordination of thought to the functional order of self promotion — the abstracting power of the social totality — assures that the gutted, self-evident and interchangeable results can't help but shine. Above each of these names — and now among them Adorno — reads: "Your choice!" The mass culture betrayal is the same as always: what appears as the familiar in *Late Marxism* is at every point the genuinely estranged.

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7. Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften* edited by Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1972), v. II(I), p. 368ff.

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Subject vs. Structure

Betty Cannon, *Sartre and Psychoanalysis* (University Press of Kansas: Lawrence, KS, 1991), 397 pp. + xvii.

The central theme of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* is consciousness and the subject's inalienable freedom. These kinds of notions clash with Freud's concept of the unconscious as the hidden determinant of human behavior. What *is* consistent with Freud, as Betty Cannon's *Sartre and Psychoanalysis* demonstrates, is an alternative Sartrean therapeutic approach aimed at curing existential anxieties. Sartre himself was aware of this possibility, as can be seen in his unflagging interest in psychoanalysis. In order to find articulate such an alternative, one must either dismantle the abstraction of unconscious processes, or offer an alternative. Cannon chooses the second path by showing that relational needs, rather than unchangeable drives, are crucial for the formation of the self. Therefore, to some extent, she follows post-Freudian psychoanalysts such as D. W. Winnicott and Heinz Kohut, who stressed the centrality of these needs.

In Sartrean terms, far from being a stable structure, the self is never a substance, and hence it cannot be the organizational principle of the psyche, able to explain actions, feelings, and desires. Rather, the self is at once spontaneous prereflective consciousness, personality, and value. The first of these is the basis of our action; ego or personality coincides with reflective, objectifying consciousness; and value, aimed at the future, stands for the fundamental project of being that every person tries to realize. Clearly, Sartre's psychoanalytical orientation privileges the future over the past and the present, as the dimension that best fits human transcendence. This is contrary to the traditional psychoanalytic approach that encourages living in the present rather than in the future.

From an existentialist perspective, Cannon shows how Freudian, Lacanian, and Sartrean views differ. We recognize that consciousness is a lack that operates, if not in a social void, at least in a metaphysical one, and that this nothingness guarantees freedom: to think otherwise is tantamount to acting and living in bad faith. This recognition does away with the need to theorize a structured unconscious. Actually, Freud was aware of the paradoxical nature of the unconscious, but found it the best explanation of such human conflicts as desiring and not desiring the same object. In other words, he arrived at the unconscious empirically, by listening to his patients, and subsequently he made it the basis of his topography.

Sartre's objections to the unconscious are primarily philosophical. Without denying psychic conflicts, he does not hide his distaste for an approach that

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reduces people to the level of objects. The unnconscious is something we endure, not something that can be used to realize our projects. It enslaves us to drives that are nothing but hypotheses, mental constructs, and abstractions. The individual Sartre has in mind is not a sum of mental structures such as the ego, superego, and id, but fluidity, temporalization, and historicity. His rejection is therefore also moral. To counteract the dangers intrinsic to the counterintuitive notion of the unconscious, Sartre openly recognizes that consciousness, even though it is transparency and intuition, must not be equated with knowledge.

If some of the themes of Freudian and existentialist psychoanalysis seem to converge, it is only because the individual undeniably has a personal and interpersonal history, continually confronts otherness, and has emotions and relational needs from early infancy. The disagreement derives rather from their respective methodological premises, leading Freud and Sartre in different directions. With an eye to the physical needs and impulses of physiological beings, Freud retains the ideal of a positivistic medical science that investigates mind and body in order to correct deviations from the norm. In so doing he hypostatizes psychic entities. Sartre, on the other hand, remains faithful to the phenomenological method. For him, there is nothing to discover behind the phenomenon. The transparency of consciousness demands descriptions rather than inferences in order to derive the existence of pregiven structures. Meaning must not be sought in a hidden profundity of the psyche, in categories that transcend the individual: we are ourselves transcendence and meaning in a world of facticity.

Cannon compares Freudian and existentialist psychoanalysis. She does not force reconciliations where they are not possible. Far from being an eclectic work, this is a passionate and at times personal defense of existentialist psychotherapy, illustrated by convincing case histories. She calls the people who seek her help clients rather than patients or analysands in order to better emphasize the egalitarian relation established during therapy. It also indicates that persons seeking help accept responsibility for their projects, and for the radical freedom underlying them. The book is convincing, but not enough to warrant dismissing the positive results achieved through other approaches. The emphasis and the outcome from other approaches would be somewhat different, since every psychotherapist is committed to a *Weltanschauung* that necessarily influences therapy. Any profound interaction between two people produces changes in them, and that reciprocal influence is our daily bread. The author accepts this unavoidable component, but she claims that existentialist psychotherapy is the least constrictive for its clients.

This becomes even more evident with Jacques Lacan. One of Cannon's reproaches to Lacan is that, because of the conservative nature of his explanations, he makes radical modifications in his clients' behavior difficult to bring about. Here again, the differences are methodological, philosophical, and ideological. What is in question is the status of the subject. While Sartre delivers it

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to a bottomless freedom productive of existential anxiety, Lacan confines it in a network of structures and impositions. Not only does Lacan accept the notion of the unconscious, he also claims that the unconscious makes us what we are. Language, itself unconscious, is not the free expression of desires and of conscious attitudes. On the contrary, it "speaks us." The notion of person is completely absent, while the ego, the repository of the aggressive drive, merely refers to defense mechanisms. Aggressiveness in particular is due to the fact that infants, at about six months, start to perceive their image in the mirror as a whole, whereas in reality their motor coordination is still at a primitive stage of development. The resulting false identification lies at the core of the imaginary register that remains with human beings forever. To be captivated by the image means that we are imbued with aggressiveness, the perfect basis to establish master-slave relations at the exclusion of more peaceful interactions. This, for Lacan, is a most common situation, considering the hierarchical social order in which people are caught.

Lacan does offer a solution to the imaginary impasse, which he calls the symbolic order. This order is ambiguous in that it comprises not only language, but also ethical relations such as marriage and the family, and an almost unabridgeable gulf between the two sexes and society. Condensing so much into a single category leads to the identification of saying and doing, to the acceptance that words are actions. This is true in instances such as perfunctive utterances. Yet it carries the inevitable consequence that not even our actions are, in any meaningful sense, our own. Since we are not the subjects of our speech, we are the pawns of a pre-established symbolic order.

Lacan has inherited Freud's pessimism and, in this sense, his claim that he was the only true Freudian is justified. Cannon emphasizes the conservative implications of this approach. But what could be the aim of a psychoanalytical process that starts from such premises? Lacan's denial of freedom leaves only one option: to accept fate. *Amor fati* is the appropriate motto summarizing such a position. In Lacan finitude, or lack-of-being, is central to the success of the therapeutical process. Sartre also recognizes human finitude, but this lack implies the possibility of transcending oneself, since it forces consciousness to look for new projects. In Lacan the lack of being has the opposite meaning. Since it cannot be overcome, it must be stoically accepted. Thus, psychoanalysis becomes, among other things, a meditation on death. Its aim, however, is primarily the analysand's passing from the imaginary aggressive attitude to the symbolic register — the order of language and ethics — which Lacan also calls "the Law."

Sartrean philosophy and, by extension, existentialist psychoanalysis, focus also on social changes and assume that genuine novelty is not just possible but desirable. Lacan's vision is more static in that, for him, the subject is a fragment in the middle of unchangeable structures, as can be seen in the admission that, in the end, even the imaginary order is insurmountable. One point overlooked by Cannon's exposition of Lacan's thought concerns the limited

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dynamic possibilities of the linguistic system. Language oscillates between two poles: metonymy and metaphor. Both mechanisms are unconscious, so much so that they are identified, respectively, with displacement and condensation: desire and the Law.

Desire is indestructible. Lacan accepts this with an additional ethical qualification. By itself, however, unrestrained desire is not Lacan's last word since it must be humanized, and the only available means to do so is with metaphors. This becomes clear when one considers that, at the beginning, the desire of the analysand knows no limit. The subject must learn, by dint of frustration, that the only viable solution to psychic conflict rests on a metaphorical, and therefore poetic, use of language. For Lacan language is an infinite system of signifiers (the signifying chain), which provides us with creative possibilities. One of these is full speech, something analogous, but not identical, to Sartre's authenticity. Analysands may dwell on empty speech, the speech that avoids the issues, but are also capable of metaphorizing and of leaving aside aggressive components of their personality. If one can speak at all of freedom in Lacan's system, it is here, in a sort of mystical union with unconscious language.

As for reaching an authentic attitude toward the world and oneself, Sartre and Lacan are miles apart. Cannon is right in pointing out Lacan's difficulties in this context: for him alienation is a fact that must be accepted. Otherness will always be present, since even our desire is always desire of the Other. Moreover, the omnipresence of the unconscious precludes a concept of the Other such as Sartre's, according to whom the Other is immediately given as another consciousness and is therefore always embodied. It is an immediacy that entails oppositions while not denying the other person's transcendence and freedom. The existence of perversions and pathological states does not exclude in principle positive reciprocity and love. Lacan sees things differently: for him love is an imaginary entanglement of two desires in which one gives what the other does not have. Compared to Sartre's, Lacan's Other is an aseptic receptacle, standing for a whole never given in intuition and, paradoxically, fragmented in character. It entails complementarity, but this is a peculiar complementarity because it turns out to be all-pervasive, the locus in which the subject loses itself, having no other place to go. The Other, however, is not completely undifferentiated, since it coincides, at least in part, with the unconscious and with the two structures of metonymy and metaphor.

Cannon rightly asserts that within a theoretical context of insoluble alienation, the subject is actually condemned to a kind of solipsism. As a mode of communication with other people, language is problematic, finding its justification in the self-referential use of signifiers. In fact, for Lacan the main function of language is not to communicate but to evoke. The analysand evokes the past, and as the past unveils, the words indicate a distorted and imaginary rendition of the symbolic order, seen as Other rather than as an integrated part of the self. To the extent that this is possible, by internalizing the Other

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the subject gradually discards past identifications that have led to an unbearable impasse.

Notwithstanding the different terminology, method, and theoretical outlook, Lacan had considerable respect for Sartre, to the point of recommending *Being and Nothingness* to his students. Considering his political disengagement, however, it is doubtful that Lacan appreciated the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*. By the same token, Sartre acknowledges Freud's theoretical contributions, even though he considered Freud's practical achievements more significant. Cannon is at her best when she enriches her psychotherapeutic practice with the social and material considerations elaborated by the later Sartre. Regrettably, these have always been conspicuously absent in traditional psychoanalysis. It is difficult to determine whether Sartrean therapy is more effective than Freudian, post-Freudian, and Lacanian approaches. Despite some naiveté in *Sartre and Psychoanalysis* (such as the generic talk of the "real person" as her focus and goal), she has convincingly shown how existentialist psychotherapy has little or nothing to be uneasy about in comparison with more fashionable forms of psychoanalytic practice.

Marcella Tarozzi Goldsmith

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Weber on China

Max Weber, *Die Wirtschaftsethik der Weltreligionen. Konfuzianismus und Taoismus: Schriften 1915-1920*, Edited by Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer and Petra Kolonko (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989), Vol. 19 of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe*. I-XIII+621 pp.

The sociology of religion Max Weber pursued in the last years of his life was inspired and initiated by the critiques of his 1905 study, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. His study of Confucianism and Taoism (*The Religion of China*) was first published in 1915 and in an expanded form in 1920 as part of his comparative studies on the economic ethics of world religions: Hinduism and Buddhism (*The Religion of India*) and *Ancient Judaism*. He had become convinced of the uniqueness of the development of Western culture and "occidental rationalism," as expressed in the introduction to the sociology of religion he wrote in 1920,[1] and all these studies were conceived primarily to illustrate those cultural phenomena which occurred "only in the occident." They in no sense constitute either individually or collectively comprehensive analyses of non-Western cultures. They are rather examples of the comparative approach to "multilinear" development that Weber pioneered. In a real sense he was the first proponent of "multiculturalism," although not in the opportunistic sense in which it is being promoted today. His exploration of the historical and cultural uniqueness of the European experience confounds those who are only able to demonstrate the character of non-Western cultures by an ideological critique of "Eurocentrism" and the presumed moral depravity of Western culture on account of racism, sexism, and all other pejoratives that find their way into contemporary academic "discourse." His comparative studies imply no moral argument with respect to any one culture, and certainly not with respect to Western culture. Industrial capitalism and occidental rationalism are historical and cultural — not moral — phenomena. It is a fact that these phenomena originated not in China or in India or anywhere else but Europe, and that they have become universally recognized as measures of modern development.

Weber's studies of the sociology of religion have been available in German since they originally appeared. The main reason for this new volume is to complete the Weber *Gesamtausgabe*. The most that can be said is that the text has been corrected and may now be considered definitive. No more of Weber's

1. Max Weber, "Author's Introduction," in Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), pp. 13-31.

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unpublished manuscripts or notes were found to supplement it. Had this edition been prefaced by a new interpretation of Weber's study of Confucianism and Taoism it might have warranted republication. But such is not the case, owing to the editorial guidelines of the Weber *Gesamtausgabe*. In line with these guidelines the chief editor, Helwig Schmidt-Glintzer, provides merely technical information regarding the text.[2]

Much more useful than Schmidt-Glintzer's introduction to this volume is Wolfgang Schluchter's "Foreword" to the collected papers presented at an international conference on Weber's China study held in 1980.[3] This conference is indicative of attitudes among academics of different disciplines, which have become even more positivistically narrow than in Weber's time. Weber found this consistent with the progress of "science," and it has proven to be more consistent with today's academic New Class ideology. It is not that the criticisms of Weber's China study are either incorrect or unwarranted. On the contrary, for the most part they are on the mark. There is no doubt that Weber's periodization of Chinese history is sketchy, that his construction of a Confucian orthodoxy and a Taoist heterodoxy is no longer in line with contemporary research, that he overemphasizes the power of magic, and so forth. But there is also no doubt that, by and large, these criticisms are the trees which prevent a view of the Chinese forest that Weber surveyed. In his "Foreword" Schluchter attempts to rescue Weber and his China study from the onslaughts of academic specialists and, because of his intense familiarity with Weber's writings, he manages to see the forest.

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2. In the section of his introduction devoted to the reception of Weber's China study, Schmidt-Glintzer, himself a Sinologist, quotes a couple of lines from all the book reviews or comments he could find, the last being those included in Karl August Wittfogel's first book on China, *Das erwachende China: Ein Abriss der Geschichte und der gegenwärtigen Probleme Chinas* (Vienna: Agis-Verlag, 1926). He offfhandedly comments that Wittfogel's concern with Weber's China study in the 1920s came to fruition in his 1957 work, *Oriental Despotism: A Comparative Study of Total Power* (New York: First Vintage Books Edition, 1981). He makes no mention of Wittfogel's most extensive discussion of Weber's China study in *Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft: Von ihren Anfängen bis zur Schwelle der grossen Revolution* (Vienna: Malik-Verlag, 1924), pp. 88ff. or of the work in which Wittfogel carried Weber's China study further than any other scholar and to which he gave tribute to Weber in the title, namely *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas: Versuch der wissenschaftlichen Analyse einer grossen asiatischen Agrargesellschaft* (Leipzig: Verlag von C. L. Hirschfeld, 1931). It was in Weber's China study and in *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft* that Wittfogel first read about the peculiar "hydraulic-bureaucratic civil-service state" (*wasserbau-bürokratischen Beamtenstaat*) which he would later develop into his "Theory of Oriental Society."

3. Wolfgang Schluchter ed., *Max Webers Studie über Konfuzianismus und Taoismus: Interpretation und Kritik* (Frankfurt a/M: Suhrkamp Taschenbuch Verlag, 1983). Although Wittfogel was not invited to this conference, one of his most vehement critics, Wolfram Eberhard, commented that Wittfogel's "standard work on Chinese economy" although "completely outdated" has still not been replaced by "any comparable compendium." He was clearly referring to *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas*, but mistakenly referred to *Oriental Despotism*. Presumably Weber's China study, written many years earlier, was also in his view "completely outdated." But Eberhard did not have much new to add.

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Weber began his sociology of religion with a study of Confucianism because, as Schluchter observes, like Puritanism it was a rational way of dealing with the world: it represented not a theoretical but a *practical* rationalism. Because Confucianism had external similarities to Puritanism, the internal *differences* served to focus his argument with respect to the uniqueness of occidental rationalism. Since he was concerned both with a sociology of rationalism and with a casuistics of ethics, he focused on the "irrational anchoring" of Confucian ethics, their social agents, and the socio-political order in which they were ultimately grounded. Different from Puritanism, whose rationalization was the result of the institutionalization of an ethic of salvation, the rationalization of Confucianism was the result of the institutionalization of a socio-political ethic — a kind of civil theology. Whereas ascetic Protestantism led to domination, the rational treatment of the world in Confucianism led to accommodation. In Weber's view, Confucianism was a political religion consistent with the needs of the patrimonial state. Furthermore, it was consistent with both the material and ideal interests of the rationalizing agents, i.e., the ruling elite, which is why Weber called China "a state of bureaucrats and civil servants." For this reason an internal elective affinity developed between Confucianism and the *literati*, whereby the latter favored patrimonialism. It was thus not a military but rather an administrative elite that assumed the central role in politics. The state examination system became not only the mechanism for recruiting civil servants but also the principal orientation of life for the *literati* as the dominant elite.

Weber observed that in China the development of fiscal economy had not destroyed economic traditionalism. The only place where this had occurred was in the West, largely because of the resistence of strong powers independent of the state, i.e., the Catholic Church, with its theocracy; autonomous cities, with their bourgeoisie, and feudalism, with its contractual relations. China lacked all three. In Chinese villages, the rule was consanguinity; in the Chinese state, patrimonial bureaucracy. Lack of competition was not limited to the political sphere. Weber found in China no rational science, art or theology, and above all no rational jurisprudence. China thus lacked all the elements of Western rationalism. He did find a rationalized bureaucratic mechanism, which is why he identifies Confucianism and Roman Catholicism as the two main historical examples of religious-rational powers. The main point, however, was that each developed a different type of bureaucracy with different objectives because each derived from fundamentally different legal traditions. In particular, China knew neither the corporation (in Weber's view, the Roman Catholic Church was the first corporation) nor subjective rights, both of which decisively influenced the character of bureaucracy in Western Europe. While Weber's appraisal of the Chinese legal development is in many respects mistaken, he rightly focused on those particular aspects, such as China's lack of "objective communities," which proved to be decisive. The Chinese bureaucracy could not distinguish between office and person, administration and law, the form of law and the content of justice.

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The periodization of dynasties was less important for Weber than the developing system of domination in China. But Schluchter gives in too much to Weber's critics when he says that Weber no doubt underrated "the developmental potential of Chinese culture," since once the system of domination in China had taken its distinctive form all other aspects of Chinese culture were subordinated to it and did not allow the independent development of capitalism and many other aspects of "modernity" as came to be defined in the European paradigm. Schluchter acknowledges that Weber was mistaken in his evaluation of Chinese scientific developments (i.e., the natural sciences), whose backwardness he attributed to the magic of Taoism. Among others, he mentions that Nathan Sivin, Benjamin Nelson and Joseph Needham have demonstrated that the development of Chinese natural sciences was on par with Europe until the 12th and 13th centuries. Of these three, Needham is by far the most important.

But Schluchter was obviously unaware that it was none other than Wittfogel's *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft Chinas* that inspired Needham's multi-volume *Science and Civilization in China*. Wittfogel adumbrated the character and limits of the natural sciences in China, in particular astronomy, which were important to the Chinese state as the "dominant agent" of agricultural production. He also devoted special attention to the examination system, Chinese cities, Chinese religion, and other aspects of culture mentioned in Weber's China study. But most important was the question that originally inspired Wittfogel's major work on China, the question which Schluchter recognized also as the most important, namely: "why China had no independent development of industrial capitalism." The emphasis in this question is on the word *independent*, which raises the further questions of how capitalism in its present form and development can be grafted onto the bureaucratic-patrimonial state in power in China today and whether it will succeed in transforming that system into one able to interact with the rest of the world.

Weber's original question in his China study thus has ramifications of particular relevance to all those societies which did not experience any of those elements of Western rationalism which resulted in the independent development of capitalism and are now confronted with a seemingly universal call for capitalism and democracy. Just as the struggle for democracy in the former Soviet Union has been one not only against the Communist Party but also a struggle to overcome centuries of despotic Russian history, so it will be in China. Properly understood, "multiculturalism" is not a moral measure but rather a recognition of the distinctiveness of different cultures. The attempt to find in non-Western cultures some superior pattern of development, some *telos* that has been somehow blocked by Western imperialists is as specious as it is ridiculous.

G. L. Ulmen

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Filiopiety Meets Labor Studies

Steve Babson, *Building the Union. Skilled Workers And Anglo-Gaelic Immigrants in the Rise of the U.A.W.* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1991), 298 pp.

Steve Babson's book will be of great interest to anyone concerned with the role of Anglo-Gaelic workers in building the United Auto Workers union. It will be of less interest to those concerned with understanding the emergence of the UAW, the CIO, and the development of the US working class. His method for revealing the secret world of Detroit's auto workers is that of "thick description," which focuses on the ethnocultural, occupational and fraternal relations of people in the context of their community life. In this regard he is squarely in the tradition of social history established by Herbert Gutman and David Montgomery a generation ago. "Thick description," as Babson acknowledges, can reveal a great deal of previously hidden and in-depth data, but at the cost of a limited or restricted generalizability.[1] There is nothing wrong in noting the accomplishments and contributions of hitherto neglected ethnic groups in working class history. As Roger Keeran has noted, "in the early organizing . . . [auto workers] relied heavily on local Communists, because they were people who could be trusted. . . . Many of the party members were foreign-born. They included Finns, Bulgarian-Macedonians, Slovaks, Russians, and Czechs. Some of these groups had their own organizations and halls which served as centers for leftwing cultural and political activity." But there is a difference between filiopietism and labor studies (p. 31).[2]

Babson's Anglo-Gaelic workers could be easily inserted into the list to make it more complete. Unfortunately he is not content to do this. He claims too much and in the process inadvertently distorts the reality he wishes to demystify. His assertion that the Anglo-Gaelic immigrant workers were "uniquely suited as union organizers" (p. 13) because of the cultural baggage they carried to American shores is simply too grand and general a statement. His belief in the uniqueness of the Anglo-Gaelic contribution is premised on his own failure to critically approach several American cultural myths relevant to the working class and its evolution. His failure on this point is ironic in that his work was undertaken to dispel some "popular myths" surrounding the emergence of the UAW and the CIO.

1. Sally Miller, *The Radical Immigrant* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1974), p. 18.
2. Roger Keeran, *The Communist Party and the Auto Workers' Unions* (New York: International Publishers, 1986), p. 83.

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Babson's project of unmasking is obscured and by his misunderstanding of the wider working class culture of 1930s America. This misinterpretation extends to the reading of contemporary scholarship. He takes to task the "popular myth" of 1930s unionism which holds that it was a manifestation of the unified and spontaneous militancy of the working masses and opposes it to his own perspective which, ". . . focuses on the role of an activist minority in sparking the mass actions of the 1930s. Instead of a spontaneously unified rank and file it stresses the uneven development of militancy, the calculation and hesitancy of the majority of workers, and the initiating role played by strategic groups" (p. 11). Proponents of the myth of spontaneism are identified as James Green, Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais. The spontaneism of these scholars is said to result from their lack of a realistic concept of leadership that "encompasses more than just the union's national executive board."

Babson is confused in categorizing the work of James Green as spontaneist, and one lacking any appreciation for activitsts, informal leaders, or strategic groups. That Green clearly is nothing of the sort is evident in that he acknowledges the value and role of the skilled foreign-born workers in the auto industry and grants them a key role in building the industrial unions of the depression era. Green wrote: "The early CIO unions were organized by a militant minority of workers in informal work groups and political organizations in which Communists and other radicals often played leadership roles."[3] The work of Boyer and Morais was undertaken specifically to highlight the unheralded efforts of the activists and the informal leaders within the labor movement: "In its pages [labor's untold story) are men and women, unknown to history but the very heart of the labor movement, distributing leaf lets, arranging meetings, collecting dues, and spreading the word and seed which built the trade union cause."[4]

How could Babson provide such a bad misinterpretation? Because he was enamored with the cultural baggage of the Anglo-Gaelic skilled workers and most interested in emphasizing the debt which they are owed by the American labor movement. Such an emphasis devalues the culture and experience of the workers in the US and implies that they were rather dependent on the stimulation of foreign activists to become a militant, active force in social and economic life. He notes that his Anglo-Gaelic militants had been influenced by their encounters with the IWW in America and elsewhere,[5] but neglects to deal with this American cultural influence in any significant way. More than any other group the IWW laid the groundwork for the organizing drives

3. James Green, *The World of the Worker* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1980), pp. 142-43 and 163.

4. Richard Boyer and Herbert Morais, *Labor's Untold Story* (New York: United Electrical Workers of America, 1973), p. 12.

5. For a fuller presentation of American influences on the development of British labor radicalism, see G.D.H. Cole's *Short History of the British Working Class Movement* (London: Compton Printing Works, 1965).

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mounted by the CIO[6].

Babson's devaluation of the cultural baggage carried by American workers who came from southern and eastern Europe is due to his uncritical acceptance of several myths regarding their abilities, desires and cultures. He suggests that these immigrants were basically instrumentalist in their attitude toward work and much less class-oriented than their skilled brethern from Britain and Ireland. Here he accepts Oscar Handlin's portrayal of southern and eastern European immigrants to America as conservative, particularistic and clan-oriented.[7] Yet as Sally Miller has shown, Handlin's portrayal was itself a stereotype raised to counter the earlier prevalent notion of the radical immigrant.[8] Babson also seems to consider the production workers in Detroit in the same way as did the old-fashioned AFL leaders — largely ignorant and unorganizable. Reality was much more complex. A generation before the UAW came to prominence in Detroit, supposedly unorganizable eastern European immigrants dominated the ranks of striking workers during the 1919 steel strike. They responded more favorably to the organizing drive than did the English-speaking workers.[9]

What happened between the 1919 steel strike and the UAW sit-downs were the Red Scare and the Americanization frenzy at factories and schools. The production workers in the auto industry appeared reticent and unconcerned with unionism because to do otherwise would have been suicidal. In the auto plants an elaborate system of spying rendered open sympathy for unionism extremely rare. The southern and eastern European immigrant workers were arrested, beaten and deported. But appearances were not everything.[10] The meaning of the workers' silence was not, as Babson suggests, a "natural" inability toward or interest in organization. Rather, it was despair at any success.[11] Within the subculture of the Detroit production workers there also existed an opposition to employer domination of the production process, as well as a desire for some political influence in the larger community.[12]

Most significantly, in the plants and communities of Detroit efforts at agitation and organization had been almost continuous since the 1920s.[13] This was

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6. Patrick Renshaw, *The Wobblies. The Story of Syndicalism in the U.S.* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1968).

7. Oscar Handlin *The Uprooted* (Boston: American Monograph Press, 1973), pp. 173ff.

8. Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

9. David Brody, *Labor in Crisis. The Steel Strike of 1919* (New York: J. P. Lippincott, 1965), p. 132.

10. Gerd Korman, *Industrialization, Immigrants, and Americanizers* (Madison: Wisconsin State Historical Society, 1967). See also Charles Panunzio *The Deportation Cases of 1919-1920* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1970.

11. Brody, *op. cit.*, p. 175.

12. On the relevance of autonomy as an issue in worker struggles, see Richard Edwards, *Contested Terrain: The Transformation of the American Workplace in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Basic Books, 1979). Also see Also see David Montgomery, *Workers' Control in America* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

13. See Keeran, *op. cit.*

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the situation in which Babson's Anglo-Gaelic workers found themselves. They certainly contributed to the organization of auto workers, but they were hardly alone. The various currents of working class culture carried within them resentment and challenge. The dramatic growth of the UAW and the CIO in the 1930s was not unprecedented. Fifty years earlier the Knights of Labor experienced a remarkable surge in its membership.[14] Then, as in the 1930s, worker efforts at organization leaped forward when a realistic opportunity to advance was perceived to exist. The tactic of the sit-down, which began in the rubber industry, gave workers that opportunity.[15] That it was employed so effectively and swiftly in the auto plants is testimony to the skill and foresight of the organizers in the UAW. That the tactic could be used so effectively depended on the willingness of the rank and file workers from eastern and southern European cultural backgounds. They were objecting to the speed-up and working conditions in the plants. But they were expressing too their resentment of the "Americanization" plans to which they had been subjected for more than a decade. Sacco and Vanzetti had been dead less than ten years and Americanization was a vital, living part of their experience and memory. It is within this wider context that one can discern the truly unique contribution of Babson's Anglo-Gaelic workers to the building of the UAW.

Since the skilled mechanics of Detroit's tool and die shops were first generation immigrants, they were largely immune to the most effective method used by corporations to break the solidarity of the workers. After WWI big business and government had found that skilled workers could be dissuaded from expressions of solidarity with the unskilled by appeals to Americanism and patriotism. Most of the unskilled workers were foreign-born. But so were the skilled workers. The tried and true tactic failed.[16] Babson's overestimation of the Anglo-Gaelic contribution is the consequence of his failure to appreciate the variety of subculthuman behavior."[17]

John DeBrizzi

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14. Norman Ware, *Labor Movement in the U.S., 1860-1895* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1929) p. 66. The Knights went from just over 111,000 members in 1885 to nearly 800,000 in 1886. This leap occurred when the organization showed that it could win strikes.

15. Sidney Lens, *The Labor Wars* (Garden City: Anchor Books, 1974), p. 333.

16. See DeBrizzi, "Class Status, and the Political-Economy of an American Industrial City," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology* No. 26 (1981), pp. 111-138.

17. Herbert Gutman, *Work, Culture & Society in Industrializing America* (New York: Vintage, 19770, p. xiii.

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In Memory of Ulysses Santamaría

The news of Ulysses Santamaría's death in Florence on February 25, 1991 stunned his friends in Europe and the US. An attack of bronchitis had left him in a coma. Rushed to the hospital, he did not survive. Ulysses' death was difficult to believe because he was a survivor. But it seems we never knew who Ulysses really was, no matter how much we loved him.

We knew him as a free-floating inteliectual who had landed in Paris through a series of coincidences and mishaps. He managed to make do through scholarships and part-time jobs. Most of his intellectual work was concerned with problems of race, discrimination and identity among blacks in the US, Europe, Israel and the Caribbean.

It made sense. Ulysses had said he was born in New York to a black American mother, who was Jewish, and a Chinese father, who was Catholic. He could trace his ancestry on one side to Ethiopian rabbis. His grandfather had been a rabbi in Jackson, Mississippi. Ulysses was closer to his mother's side of the family. His father, who owned a chain of Chinese restaurants, had disowned him because of Ulysses' politics. He never saw his father anymore, although he remained in touch with a rich Chinese uncle on Long Island, where he would occasionally visit to see his brothers and sisters. Essentially, Ulysses had always been on his own.

During his teenage years, Ulysses said, he was sent to Madrid, where he lived with a Jewish family and studied at a Yeshiva. If he had any family at all, it was this one in Madrid. Once he graduated from the Yeshiva, he went to study in Germany and Sweden and also visited Israel. He had always been involved in leftist politics, and it seemed only natural, then, that in the early 1970s he would settle down in Paris, the heart of the 68 revolution. It was impossible to walk down a street in Paris without people saying hello to Ulysses, as if they knew him.

Perhaps they did. Perhaps we did. It is difficult to say, for as we began to talk to others who had known Ulysses we discovered that Emilio Ulysses Santamaría had not been born in New York but in Santo Domingo on November 26, 1947. An only child, his parents were divorced soon afterwards. His father remarried and took his new family to New York. Ulysses stayed with his mother, Rosa Arriaga. During his teenage years he quit school and became involved in the democratic movement that helped bring Juan Bosch to power in 1965. After the US marines invaded the Dominican Republic to topple Bosch, Ulysses continued working with leftist groups. Worried about her son, his mother left for New York where she hoped to earn enough money to send for for him. By 1967 it became too dangerous for Ulysses to remain in Santo

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Domingo and he was assisted by political friends to go first to Italy and then Spain. In the early 1970s he studied at the Instituto Iberoamericano at the Universidad Complutense in Madrid and traveled in Germany and the Soviet Union. In 1974 he made his home in Paris and established close contact with emigrants from Haiti and the Dominican Republic. Eventually he married a Frenchwoman, Veronique Cleenewerk and fathered two children: Neal and Chloé. He hoped to obtain a permanent post in the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique so he would have a steady income. But some French social scientists, who disliked his politics and manner, blocked his application for reasons both personal and practical.

Ulysses seemed to publish everywhere, especially in *Les Temps Modernes* and other leading journals of sociology, politics and anthropology in Europe and the US. Moreover, as a kind of intellectual broker he had contacts everywhere. He obtained his doctorate in sociology from the Ecole des Hautes Etudes in 1982 and by 1990 had completed his work for the *Doctorat d'Etat*. He became dependent on part-time teaching and adjunct appointments, freelancing from the Maison des Science de l'Homme. Recently he visited Israel and began working on a book on the Falasha — the Ethiopian Jews. He also received a grant to do a study of delinquency and hooliganism in England and was working at the University of Florence on a one-year research grant.

There was not one oppressed group with which Ulysses did not identify and hardly a language he did not know through osmosis. Ironically, he was worried about the *identity* of the "New" Europe of 1992, hoping it would not threaten his own unique identity.

— Jack Zipes

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